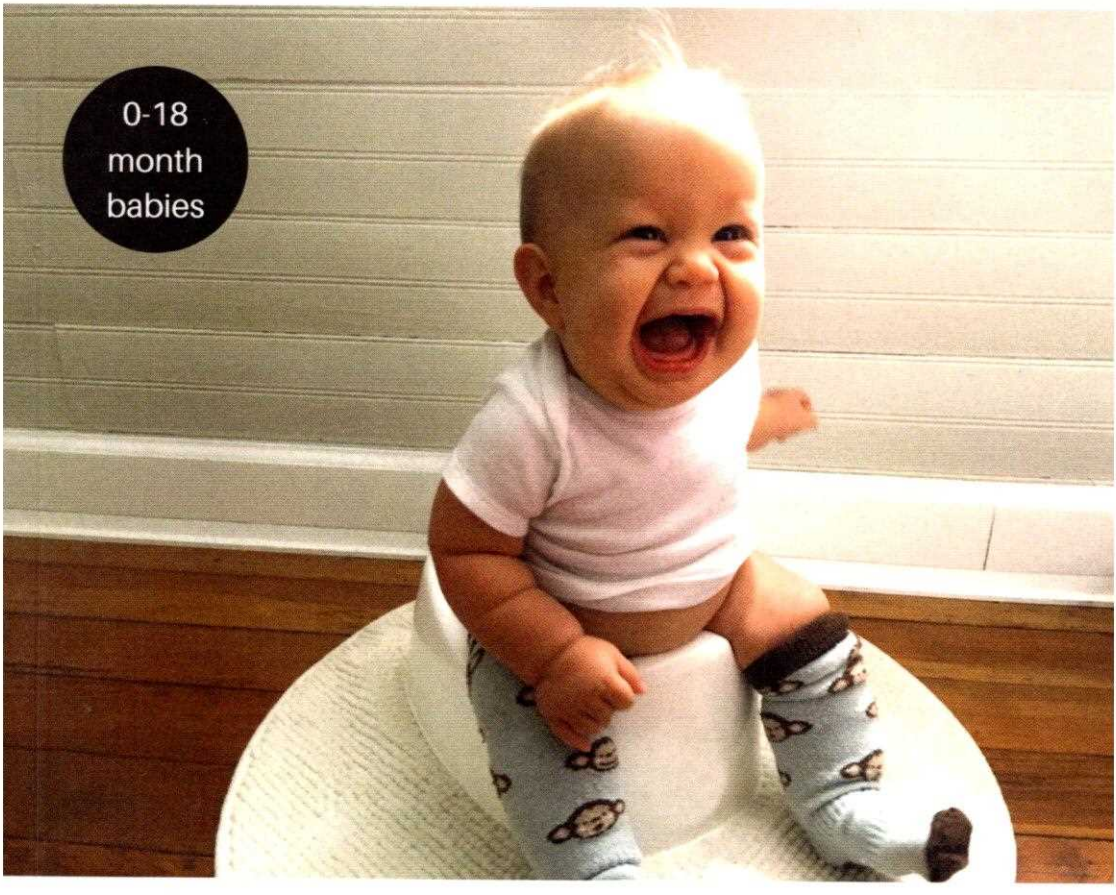
6TH EDITION



GO DIAPER FREE

a simple handbook for
elimination communication

ANDREA OLSON, MA

author of the tiny potty training book, tiny potty,
night potty, and brave new birth

GO DIAPER FREE

A simple handbook for
elimination communication

by Andrea Olson, M.A.

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To my diaper-free family:
David, Kaiva, Isadora, Cooper, Branson, and Twyla

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION **1**

Welcome to the Go Diaper Free Book 2
Who I Am 4
Who This Book Is For 7
Why I Wrote This Book Backward 8
Special Readers' Area Access 10
How this Book is Different 11

CHAPTER 1: HOW TO DO EC **13**

The Nutshell Version 14
Parts 1 and 2... A Pretty Simple Overview *14*
The Basics, Part 1: When Does Baby Need To Potty? *14*
The Basics, Part 2: How To Potty Your Baby *16*
The Forms You'll Need *18*
The Basics, Part 1: When Does Baby Need To Potty? 19
Breakdown of Part 1, Step 1: Observe *21*
Breakdown of Part 1, Step 2: Cue *26*
Breakdown of Part 1, Step 3: Notice Baby's Signals *29*
Types of Baby Signals *34*
Babywearing Signals *35*
Breakdown of Part 1, Step 4: Notice Baby's Natural Timing *37*
Breakdown of Part 1, Step 5: Become Aware of Generic Timing *40*
Generic Timing: Common Times That Babies Need to Go *42*
The 4 Easy Catches *44*
Breakdown of Part 1, Step 6: Notice Your Intuition *46*
The Basics, Part 2: How To Potty Your Baby 50
Breakdown of Part 2, Step 1: Notice It's Potty Time *52*
Breakdown of Part 2, Step 2: Acknowledge, Undress, & Go to Potty Space *55*
Possible Potty Environments *57*
Possible Potty Receptacles *58*
Breakdown of Part 2, Step 3: Position & Cue *60*
Breakdown of Part 2, Step 4: Be Patient *63*
Breakdown of Part 2, Step 5: Notice When Baby Says "I'm Finished" *68*
Breakdown of Part 2, Step 6: Reflect or Say Nothing *70*
Breakdown of Part 2, Step 7: Clean Up *74*
Mobile Baby + Young Toddler Modifications and Maintenance 78
The Optional Hybrid Plan for 12-18 months *78*
Observation *79*

Sound Association 79
Diapers or not? 79
Misses 80
Signals/Prompting/Cueing 81
Troubleshooting 81
Maintenance Tips for Mobile Babies and Beyond 82
The Re-set 84
34 More Tips for Starting Older (All Ages Between 6-18 Months) 85
POSITIONS GALLERY 92
A Little Bit About EC Positions 92
Indoor Pottying Positions 93
Outdoor Pottying Positions 107
Car Pottying Positions 113
Setting Up a Soaker Pad on Any Surface 120
Breastfeeding Pottying Positions 122
Aiming the Boy Pottying Positions 124
Posture While Pottying 128
Other Position Photos 130

CHAPTER 2: UNIQUE SITUATIONS + HOW-TO'S 143

7 UNIQUE SITUATIONS 144
Pottying While Breastfeeding 144
Pottying in Nature 146
City Pottying 149
Car Pottying (Next to Parked Car) 150
Car Pottying (Inside Parked Car) 150
Cold Weather ECing 152
Travel and EC 153
NIGHTTIME EC 158
Introduction 158
Key Points + How-to's 159
How to Get More Sleep While Doing Nighttime EC 160
Night Pottying Troubleshooting 168
The Dream Pee 172
How I've Done Our Nighttime Routines, Stage by Stage 178
Some Things to Remember 185
PART-TIME EC 187
EC for Working Parents (& Other Part-timers) 187
DIAPERS + DIAPER-FREE TIME 195
Introduction 195
How to Diaper with EC 195
Do I Have to Do Away with Diapers? 213
Doing Regular Diaper-free Time, Responsibly 217
THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF POTTY INDEPENDENCE 223
Steps to Potty Independence + Graduation 223

The Building Blocks: What Can Be Taught, and When 226
When Full-on Completion is Possible 234
How to Complete the EC Process 235
Potty Independence: It's About Baby's Capability and Parent's Direction 237

CHAPTER 3: PHILOSOPHY **239**

EC Philosophy: Useful Background Information 240
What to know before beginning 240
What is EC? 240
A Big Picture Message 242
Defining EC 243
Philosophy 251
Vocabulary 259
When to Begin EC 264
Keys to EC 273
Benefits of EC 277
Over 25 Benefits of Doing EC 277

CHAPTER 4: TROUBLESHOOTING **287**

Potty Pauses 288
Troubleshooting 295
Our EC Has Stopped Working 295
My Younger Baby Cries Every Time I EC 297
My Older Baby Protests When I Offer a Pottytunity 297
How Do I Aim This Thing? (Boys) 299
We're in Position & Cueing but Nothing is Happening 301
My Baby Won't Signal (Or Suddenly Stopped Signaling) 301
I Am SO Frustrated! How Do I Deal with My Own Frustration? 303
My Baby Refuses to Leave Playtime to Pee 304
My Child Withholds His Poop When I Take Him, or Stops Pooping and Won't Continue 305
I'm Catching All the Poops, But Not Many of the Pees 306
How Do I Get My Baby to Stop Peeing on the Floor? 308
My Baby Will Not Sit on the Potty Any More / Long Enough to Go 309
We Ditched the Diapers but He Keeps Wetting/Soiling his Undies/ Pants! 310
My Child Totally Gets It ALL, but Keeps Peeing on the Floor 312
How Do I Complete EC? Or "My Child is Over 18 Months and I'm Ready to be Done!" 312
How Do I Know When to Say When? 313

THANK YOU! **317**

APPENDIXES **319**

Appendix 1: Supply List 320
Appendix 2: Book Owners Website and Private Support Group 323

APPENDIX 3: RESOURCES 325
APPENDIX 4: MORE FROM THE AUTHOR 328
Books *328*
Undies + Potties *329*
Masterclasses *329*
MiniCourses for EC *330*
Courses *331*
APPENDIX 5: REFERENCES 332

ABOUT THE AUTHOR 335

Introduction

WELCOME TO THE GO DIAPER FREE BOOK

Elimination Communication has the potential to change the world, one baby at a time.

Hi there! Welcome to my book, *Go Diaper Free*. I am so glad you've found us! I wrote this book because when I was first pregnant, and when my baby came, I had such difficulty wrapping my head around how to *start* EC that I almost didn't try it. I am so happy I didn't give up, and I want to help you do the same.

I wrote the original version of this book when my first baby was 5 months old. Since then, I've had 4 more babies, and I'm proud to say I haven't had to potty train a single one, and they've all been out of daytime diapers around walking. They've all pooped in the toilet from birth. EC has literally been a life-changer for us (and the 100,000s of other parents I've helped over the years).

EC has made our relationship with our babies and everything about parenting so much easier. It's helped our babies have tremendous self-confidence, early mobility, easy communication, and it has normalized our babies' behavior (they're super-pleasant to be around!). EC has helped our family save money, time, mess, frustration, and in a small way, Mother Earth. Most importantly, EC has helped us develop an intimacy with our babies I am certain we would have otherwise missed, something that will serve us all far into the future.

Now let's talk about you. **I intend to help you simply and easily learn how to use EC with your baby at any age.** I am not here to convince you to do EC, nor am I able to cover every little detail. But if I can help just one more family step into EC with ease, joyfully, my purpose will have been served.

If you are ready to dive into EC and want simple, vivid instruction, this book is for you. I hope you will find it easy to follow and implement.

(And don't forget to supplement this book with the free multimedia stuff on our Book Owners Website, linked from Appendix 2, where you can also gain access to support if you need a helping hand.)

May you enjoy your journey – and thank you for letting me be part of it!

xx

PS - If you need any help with implementing EC, the first place to turn is our private support group – learn more in Appendix 2. If you ever need to contact me directly for any reason, you can find me @GoDiaperFree on Instagram, at YouTube.com/c/GoDiaperFree, at Facebook.com/GoDiaperFree, or email me at andrea@godiaperfree.com. I'm here for you! I'd love for you to come by and say hello, whether you have questions or not.

WHO I AM

I'm Andrea. I'm mama to 5 babies born over 8 years, all "ECed" from birth. Between loads of laundry and cooking meals, I've written a few books, including this one on Elimination Communication.

Before having my babies, I earned my Master's in Psychology and practiced for a few years. I thought I had a pretty good handle on child psychology until I became a mom...and that's when the real learning began. Starting with my first homebirth and subsequent years of actual mothering (and more births, including two fantastic unassisted births), I've certainly earned a residual PhD.

I am the newish Director of DiaperFreeBaby, Inc. This non-profit organization has deeply influenced my personal EC practice. From the beginning, the former Directors fully endorsed the work I've done to continue EC's forward movement, and I am honored to serve as their Director, continuing to make free EC support groups available to people worldwide.

I am also the Director of the Go Diaper Free Certified Coach Training Program and teach parents from all over the globe how to bring EC to their towns and cities.

So, that's about it for my relevant credentials. Now about me and EC and this book. I have been doing Elimination Communication with my

babies since the day each was born. I caught the first tarry poop in the potty, and I have been hooked on avoiding poopy diapers ever since.

I heard about EC in 2006 when the first of my friends-of-friends had a baby. Someone said, "Yeah, they don't use diapers! They do this thing where you communicate with your baby instead. She pees in the sink!" I was intrigued. I thought to myself, *when I have my first child, I'm going to do that.*

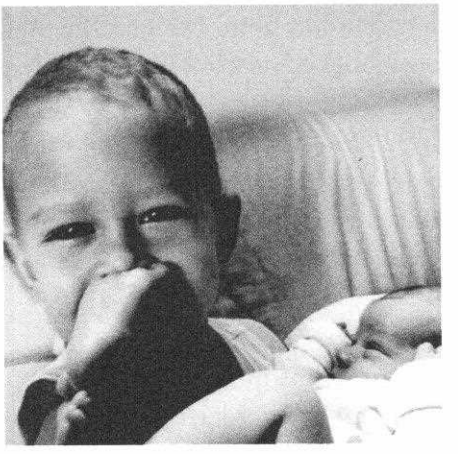
When I first became pregnant in 2009, I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I wanted to do what indigenous folks all over the world do: natural pottying. However, the information available at the time seemed overwhelming, complex, and inaccessible for me at that "placenta-brain" phase of pre- and post-partum. I read the relevant texts again and again and still lacked confidence.

All I wanted was a clear step-by-step of how to start EC at birth.

So, after a few months of working it out as I went, I created my first book to help other parents learn how to begin EC with any age baby, presented in a simplified and visual format. It's been such an enriching journey that in the future, I plan to begin filming a comparative documentary on pottying around the world. I am curious to know the intimate details of pottying across the Earth's remaining intact communities.

As I mentioned in the welcome section you've just read, I've since had 4 more babies, and none have required potty training. They've been out of daytime diapers (which they very rarely pooped in) by 9 months, 13 months, 17 months, 12 months, and 12 months, respectively.

I am living proof that even as a super-busy mom of 5 who runs three home-based businesses, even as a family who sends our kids to preschool every morning, **EC can be integrated into *any* family's lifestyle, and it is way easier than full-time diapering.** If I can do it, you can do it.



Well, enough about me. Let's get on with the show!

Warmly,

PS - I wrote this book in a conversational format, so please pardon any occasional frankness, tartness, enthusiasm, dry humor, or anything else that might not seem up to professional par. This was a conscious choice to make reading (and learning) a little bit more fun and personal. Oh, and sometimes I repeat myself, which I do intentionally to reinforce important stuff.

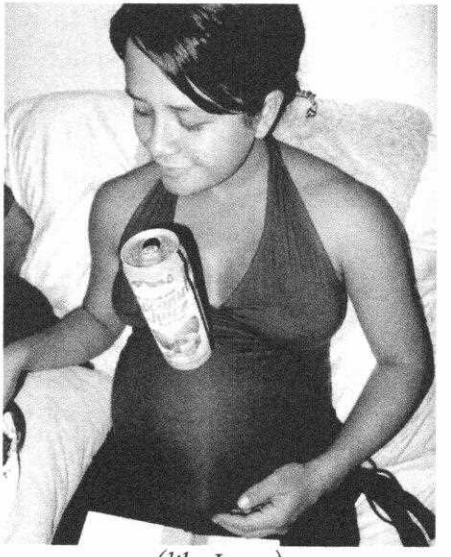
I've also chosen to alternate the pronouns "he/his/him" and "she/hers/her" throughout the book instead of saying "s/he" all over the place – that makes it hard to read the text. I realize some of you have boys and some of you have girls, so just replace it in your mind if it bothers you. I also acknowledge that some of you use the "they/them" pronoun with your babies, so feel free to replace the "he's" and "she's" with "they" if it bothers you. We are all-inclusive in the GDF community – just wanted to name that up front. :)

Last, while I mention my own babies and our experiences throughout this book, my writing is deeply informed by what I've learned helping 100,000s of parents worldwide do EC with their babies, too. I've got you fully covered!

WHO THIS BOOK IS FOR

This book is for anyone with a young baby who is yearning for a natural alternative to full-time diapering and conventional toilet training.

This book is for pregnant mamas and their partners who want to give their babies the utmost in natural, responsive, and gentle parenting, from the get-go...but don't have the brainwaves or energy available to read complex instructions or text-heavy books.



(like I was)

This book is also for folks who want to have a baby someday in the future and are researching different parenting tools.

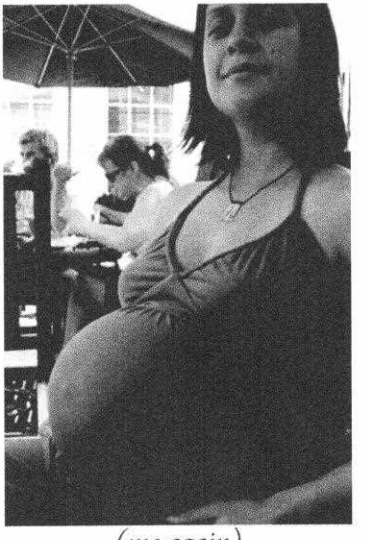
The earlier parents start EC, the smoother the journey. I recommend beginning at the first optimum window, 0-4 months, but if you've arrived here and you're beyond that window (and within the first 18 months), you'll be just fine. I have special instructions for you.

WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK BACKWARD...

Many books are written in this order: first some history, then the underlying philosophy, and finally what the book promised to cover...at the end. Well, mine wasn't. I've written my book backward!

I've a good reason for this: If you never reach the part of this book that's about how to do EC, you may never do it.

I know how it is to be expecting a little one. The pregnant woman's brain dims to just a flicker of what it used to be. Calculators and thesauruses become desperately necessary, yet difficult to use.



(me again)

Movement...slows...way...down.

Partners of pregnant women are equally "not all there." They're either worried about what's coming next; busy preparing and providing for what's coming next; terrified and avoiding all thoughts of what's coming next; so excited about what's coming next that they can't focus.

So, for those expecting parents walking through jello, I put the juice first.

For those of you who already have a young baby or newborn (and perhaps other older children), need I even write how much you've got going on? Hence, juice first.

When I was pregnant, I wanted the juice first. With pictures and pretty drawings and flow charts. I went into ECing knowing it's what I wanted to do, and I didn't need the history until much later (when my body and brain recovered). Eight months later!

Perhaps you're the same. If you're not, no worries, go to the Table of Contents and read the Background & Philosophy section first.

But if you need to get to the point as much as I did, I wrote this book backward for you. You're welcome.

Now let's get started, from the end...

because every serene moment counts....

Special Readers' Area Access

Throughout this book, I mention the Private Support Group, Video Library, extra Troubleshooting Knowledge Base, and Downloadable Forms. If you'd like to access all this extra information, see Appendix 2 and follow the instructions.

How this Book is Different

(from the previous versions)

In version 6.0, I've gone through every single page with a fine-toothed comb and made updates based on what is *actually* working for people in our private support group, private q+a calls, and social media conversations. I've also removed things that haven't been working for families. I've updated all the graphics and photos and mentioned additional resources I've created over more recent years. And I've updated little things here and there to make this book simple and painless.

I've updated the entire Book Owners Website, which is now home to our private support group, and I've removed a few things to make it simple. The downloads and guides have been revised, as well as the Hybrid Plan for 12-18 month olds (we'll cover that optional download when we discuss how to start EC with mobile babies and toddlers).

This version 6.0 also contains the improvements included in Go Diaper Free revisions 1-5, such as The Nutshell Version, a new positions gallery, and a bunch of little details like how to prevent teaching your baby to pee on the floor (um, very important). I've also added the 4 Easy Catches and information about the "dream pee" to this version of the book because folks have found these topics essential.

I've added notes for additional resources throughout this book, such as particular podcast episodes, youtube videos, video minicourses, and blog posts I've created that will help you take certain topics to the next level *if* you need to dive deeper.

I think you will find this 6th edition to be **the new conclusive guide** to starting, troubleshooting, and wrapping up an EC practice with a 0-18 month old baby. **Shall we begin?**

Chapter 1: How to Do EC

The Nutshell Version

In this section, we'll start with the nutshell version of how to start EC, a simple definition, and some basic keys to remember while beginning, just so you have your feet immediately under you. After this section, we will get more detailed with The Basics Part 1 and 2, mobile baby and young toddler considerations, positions, back-up diapering, philosophy, and anything else you might need to know to get started. Remember that you do NOT have to do EC full-time, but some sort of consistency is a great idea. There's a section on Part-time EC I hope you'll read. Okay, now for the nutshell of what in the world you'll be learning.

Parts 1 and 2... A Pretty Simple Overview

I've divided the whole process of starting EC into two basic parts:

- Part 1: How to know when your baby needs to potty
- Part 2: How to potty your baby

Depending on your baby's age, this basic process will vary ever so slightly. You'll see that when you get to the notes on mobile babies and young toddlers. So here's the general Nutshell Version *first* so you can understand the big picture.

The Basics, Part 1: When Does Baby Need To Potty?

No matter the age of your child, you will follow this basic pattern to learn *when* your baby needs you to help her go potty. You won't necessarily take your child to the potty for the hours or days you're doing Part 1 – you're in learning and observation mode, so you'll just do that until you start Part 2.

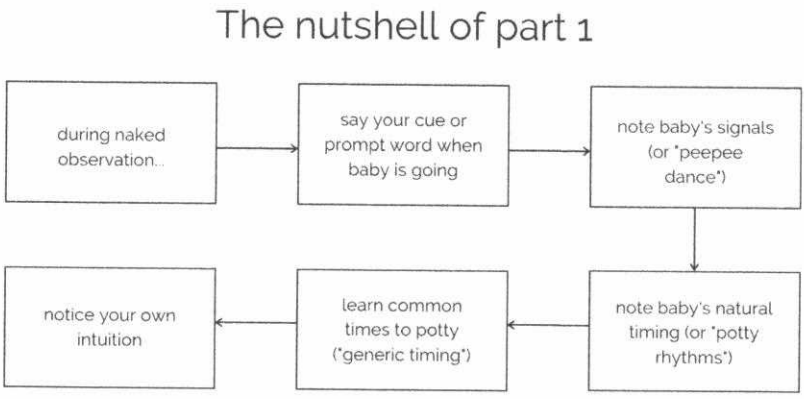
This is the *very rough* version, in words:

You'll observe your child during naked time (or modify it with trainers or a sumo-style diaper) for a few hours or days (however long it takes), and during this time, every time you see her pee or poop you'll either cue along with her, or if she's a bit older and more developed, you'll say a word that you'd eventually like for her to say to you when she needs to go. This is called sound association.

During this observation time, you'll also note your baby's signals, aka peepee dance (this is what happens right before she goes). You may find nothing. No worries. You'll also note her natural timing, or how long she normally takes to go pee or poop after feeding or waking. Meanwhile, you'll also be studying up on what times most babies need to pee (or when it's really convenient or sensible for you to offer). Incorporate these however you wish into your daily routines. You'll also check in with your own intuition during observation time, which you may notice during this "getting to know you" part of The Basics.

That's what you're lookin' for, in an over-simplified nutshell.

Here's something for those of you who are more visual learners:


The nutshell of part 1
during naked observation...
say your cue or prompt word when baby is going
note baby's signals (or "peepee dance")
note baby's natural timing (or "potty rhythms")
learn common times to potty ("generic timing")
notice your own intuition

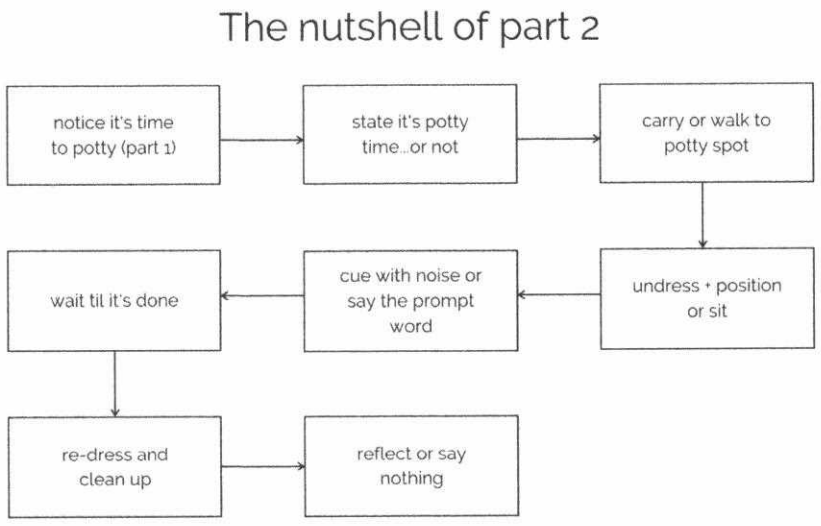
The Basics, Part 2: How To Potty Your Baby

Once you learn all that, you STOP Part 1. Here is the nutshell of Part 2.

It's time to begin actually pottying your child. Here's how: You'll notice one of the four things you learned during Part 1 (a signal from him, his natural timing is nigh, it's a common time to potty the babe, or your intuition kicks you). You'll either state (not ASK – you'll rarely ask if they need to go) that it is potty time or just stay silent and let your actions speak for you. Whether your child can walk or not dictates how you get to the potty space, but know that you somehow get there and get the pants and/or diaper back-up out of the way (undress).

Then you either get your wee baby into position or have your young toddler sit down and cue – or say your prompt word – during the pee or poop. Once. Then wait. {sounds of pee or poop going into the proper container} Once done, which should be pretty obvious, you simply clean up and re-dress your babe and you're all finished. Oh, and if you are inclined to reflect what she did (you went pee), then go right ahead. If not, saying less also shows confidence, so you may do that.

Here's a visual of that process I just described:


The nutshell of part 2
notice it's time to potty (part 1)
state it's potty time...or not
carry or walk to potty spot
undress + position or sit
cue with noise or say the prompt word
wait til it's done
re-dress and clean up
reflect or say nothing

And that, my friends, is the very, very, very simplified nutshell of pottying your baby. PLEASE don't skip the detailed explanation of starting EC in the next section. Thanks!

QUICK NOTE: As your baby gets older, here is a short preview of how things will evolve. Over time, you'll hand off the baton and teach certain parts, working closely with your child as necessary. Occasionally, you may need to re-learn her timing (through Part I, observation), as baby matures. And over time you'll become involved less and less. But (roughly) for months 0-14, you can pretty much expect to be doing the bulk of the *pottying support*, be it prompting, cueing, holding, directing, or teaching. (If you weren't doing EC, you'd be changing diapers, dealing with fussier behavior, possibly dealing with diaper rash, and cleaning poop off bottoms every day for 14 months – more like 36 months! – anyway, so we think doing *potty support* is much, much easier!)

If The Nutshell Feels Overwhelming and You'd Like To "Ease In"

The best way to start EC is with the Basics Part 1 & 2 (the next sections). They will give you the most solid foundation upon which to do EC over the long haul.

However, if this feels overwhelming, or if you are just curious about EC and not ready to commit just yet, I have a way for you to dip in your little pinky toe that will build confidence and give you a taste of EC with your baby: The 4 Easy Catches. They are explained in Part 1, Step 5 (and on my YouTube channel and my podcast).

After trying those out, if you're like most parents you'll need the Basics Part 1 & 2 to take the next step toward doing EC successfully (and correctly) for the long haul, and those Basics are up next!

It's Time to Learn How to Do EC With Your Baby

The next two sections are the most important parts of this book: The Basics Part 1 & 2. Read Part 1 to learn *When Does Baby Need To Potty?*

This involves learning signals, timing, and cues for a few days or weeks. Then, read Part 2 for *How To Potty Your Baby*: it's time to begin pottying.

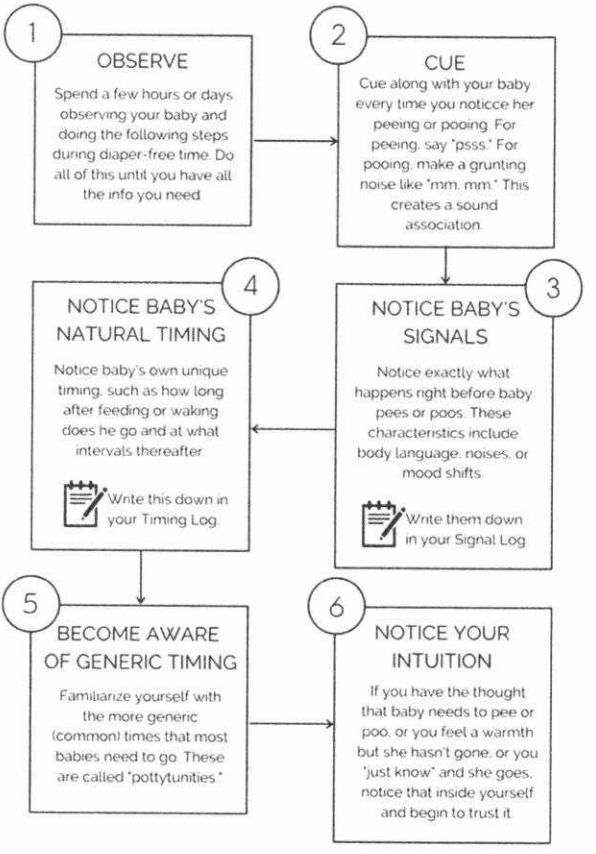
As you embark on this exciting journey, equipped with The Basics, continue with the remainder of this book to learn more about positions, back-up diapering, wrapping up the process, philosophy, gear, and support.

The Forms You'll Need

To find all the forms and guides I've made for you to help you on your journey, see Appendix 2 to access our Book Owners website and visit the Downloads section, then download and print as you need them. You do *not* have to use these forms, but if you're a forms type of person, they're there to help you. (You'll also find access to our private support group and private video library at the same link.)

THE BASICS, PART 1: WHEN DOES BABY NEED TO POTTY?

During this learning stage, do not take your baby to the potty just yet. Your goal is to Observe, Notice, Learn, and Build Association around Signals, Timing, Cues, and Intuition. Here's an overview of how you'll learn when your baby needs to go and how to cue along with him, with more details on the following pages.


1
OBSERVE
Spend a few hours or days observing your baby and doing the following steps during diaper-free time. Do all of this until you have all the info you need.
2
CUE
Cue along with your baby every time you noticce her peeing or pooing. For peeing: say "psss." For pooing: make a grunting noise like "mm, mm." This creates a sound association.
3
NOTICE BABY'S SIGNALS
Notice exactly what happens right before baby pees or poos. These characteristics include body language, noises, or mood shifts.
Write them down in your Signal Log.
4
NOTICE BABY'S NATURAL TIMING
Notice baby's own unique timing, such as how long after feeding or waking does he go and at what intervals thereafter.
Write this down in your Timing Log.
5
BECOME AWARE OF GENERIC TIMING
Familiarize yourself with the more generic (common) times that most babies need to go. These are called "pottytunities."
6
NOTICE YOUR INTUITION
If you have the thought that baby needs to pee or poo, or you feel a warmth but she hasn't gone, or you "just know" and she goes, notice that inside yourself and begin to trust it.

A Tip from Andrea

You may want to do all the steps for Part 1 for several hours or days **before** attempting to take baby to potty (With my first baby, I did Part 1 – observation – for the first 2 weeks after birth when I was in bed recovering anyway. With my second-fifth babies, I skipped observation and went straight to full-on EC – Part 2 – because with every new baby EC became more and more second nature.).

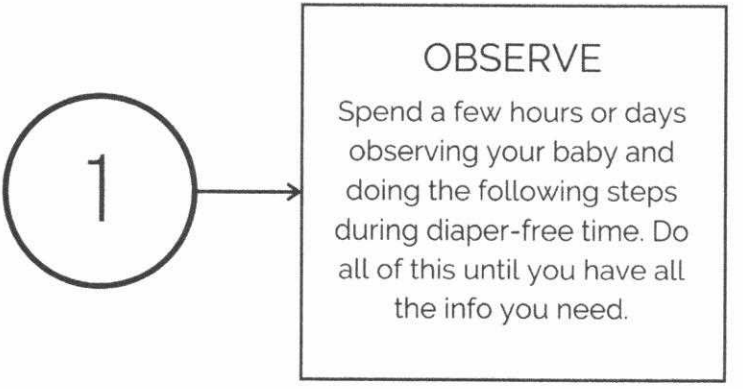
The benefits of doing Part 1 for a while before moving on to Part 2:

- baby will get used to the sound of your Cues and associate them with pottying
- you will get used to baby's Signals (if any)
- you will get used to baby's Natural Timing
- you will have time to learn Generic (Common) Timing (Transition Times)
- you will give yourself some time to tune into your own Intuition
- it will be less frustrating if you learn the Cues, Signals, and Timing first
- you will feel less pressure to do it "right."

If you feel you've gotten the hang of it after a shorter while and want to dive right into Potty Time, go directly to Part 2.

NEWBORN RESOURCE: If you are starting at birth (up to 12 weeks), complement what you're about to learn with my video mini-course, Baby Meets Potty. It includes footage of newborn observation time, how to potty a newborn on day one, and more. Learn more in Appendix 4, More from the Author, and don't forget to keep reading the rest of this book alongside that course because this is the foundation of a good EC practice.

BREAKDOWN OF PART 1, STEP 1: OBSERVE


1
OBSERVE
Spend a few hours or days observing your baby and doing the following steps during diaper-free time. Do all of this until you have all the info you need.

HOW TO DO NAKED DIAPER-FREE OBSERVATION TIME

You will do Steps 2-6 of Part 1 during diaper-free observation time (which is this step – Step 1). Here's how:

1. Observe your baby diaper-free in a warm, safe space (either on a bed, floor, or laying on your body or lap).
2. Use one or more layers of these under your baby to absorb the pee/poop* (this layering is called a "soaker pad"):
   - a cloth prefold (which is just an absorbent cloth diaper)
   - a blanket (perhaps a cotton receiving blanket)
   - a 100% wool puddle pad (must have a blanket or prefold over it to absorb the pee)
   - a towel
   - a waterproof pad (has a cloth layer and a plastic layer)
   - a disposable incontinence pad, aka "Chucks Pad" (a common homebirth supply found at the drugstore)

   example 1: Place your baby on a prefold over a towel over a waterproof pad over the sheets of your bed.

   example 2: Place your baby on a prefold over a wool puddle pad on your lap.

example 3: While laying down, place your baby on a single cotton prefold over your naked belly/chest.

3. For boys who pee straight out/up, you can place a thin cloth over his penis and pay attention to when it gets wet or use Tiny Trainers. However, if you can brave a few messy pees without a covering, you'll get much more information.
4. For older babies, observe on a non-carpeted floor, or outdoors, where messes can be easily cleaned.
5. After you've gathered your info (1-2 days), discontinue **naked** time unless your child, for some strange reason, doesn't pee on the floor.

   example 4: Line your living room in yoga mats, towels, whatever, and have the mini potty nearby, in the room with you.

   example 5: Observe outdoors or over any non-carpeted floor.

   example 6: With a mobile or walking baby, use a sumo-style diaper (see How to Diaper with EC) with a burp cloth (which is much thinner than a cloth diaper insert) and diaper belt or use Tiny Trainers and check occasionally for wetness, recording your findings later on in this process.
6. For mobile or walking babies, while you are doing observation, when your baby begins to pee or poop, have the potty nearby and bring the baby to the potty every time, for consistency. Gently say "wait" or "potty" when he begins to go on the ground, then transport him to the proper receptacle (or bring the receptacle to him). Or just let him experiment, your choice! See what works for you. We will cover this more later.

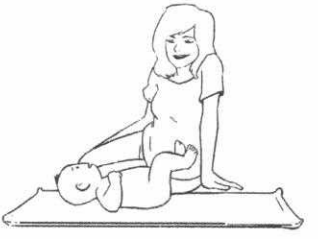
Our early diaper-free time consisted of a few pre-folds, a soft blanket, and a towel.

If you are uncomfortable doing or unable to do naked diaper-free observation time, simply use a back-up (undies, trainers, or try diapering Sumo-style – see How to Diaper with EC) and try to notice when it gets wet. Or, focus more on cueing with in-diaper poops and using timing as a tool (next pages).

*For a step-by-step photo demonstration of how to set up your soaker pad for diaper-free observation, see the Positions section.

When To Do Diaper-free Observation Time

1. Frequently during the newborn weeks when you're mostly skin-to-skin anyway (prime observation time!)
2. At a designated time each day in an "okay" area for regular diaper-free time (if pee-on-floor is a problem, use clothing)
3. Before bath time (for easy cleanup)
4. After a "miss" or "misguess" – if you didn't successfully catch the last one, have some diaper-free time, pay attention, and learn from the experience.
5. For an older baby, outside on a nice sunny day (with sunscreen if he needs it). Have the potty nearby and bring the baby to the potty *even when outdoors*, for consistency. Remember to say "wait" or "potty" when he begins to go on the ground, then transport him to the proper receptacle. Or just let him experiment, your choice! See what works for you.
6. Any time you need to re-discover your baby's signals, natural timing, or both. You will likely repeat this process several times over the months to gather more information if you're out of sync, having lots of misses, or experiencing potty resistance.



Why Diaper-free Time Is Important

You have to learn some things to do EC effectively. Having your babe naked or diaper-free will help you gather this information efficiently. Although you should stop naked observation if/when you've gathered all your info (even if that info says "there is no signal"), here's why it's important to have regular, responsible* diaper-free time throughout your baby's life:

1. Baby will experience "cause & effect." *My bladder fills, I release it, and this wet stuff comes out.* This tremendously increases the speed of learning.
2. Baby will have more mobility without the diaper on, which could increase motor skills and enable earlier self-dressing.
3. Time without a diaper is a great time to nurture baby's skin, giving it fresh air and sunlight, discouraging diaper rash.
4. Baby can explore her genital areas and develop a positive self-perception around sexuality, cleanliness, and her body image.
5. Parents will learn more about the baby's signals and natural timing by observing while diaper-free. Trying to learn these things with a diaper on is nearly impossible.

*An Important Note: How to Maintain Responsible Diaper-free Time after Observation Ends?

"Diaper-free" means free from exclusive dependence upon diapers. It doesn't mean having a naked kiddo running around peeing all over your floor 24/7. Model the "right" thing.

This has become an issue for many ECers. Let's prevent that by reading the section later in the book called Doing Regular Diaper-free Time, Responsibly, shall we?

A Few Reminders...

In the Beginning
In this beginning stage, do as much diaper-free observation time as you are able and comfortable with until you've gathered the necessary information. Again, you'll do Steps 2-6 (next pages) *during* this diaper-free observation time that you've just learned how to do here in Step 1. By collecting this info prior to pottying your baby, you'll have an advantage!

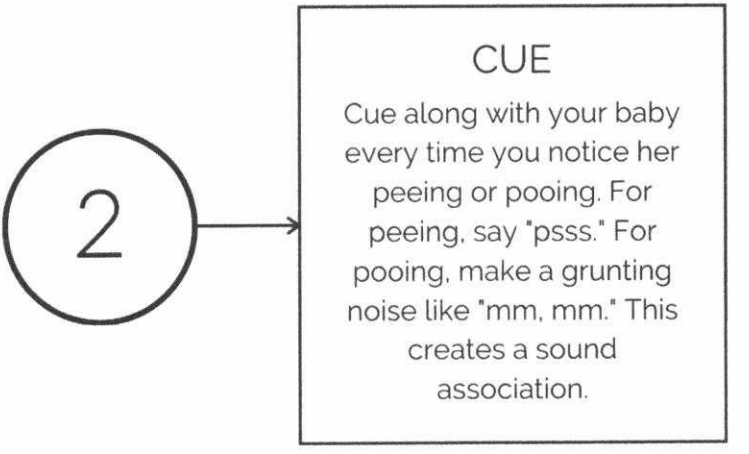
Ongoing Diaper-free Time
As your baby grows, offer diaper-free time as often as you wish, whether you're observing signals/timing or not, and avoid teaching him to pee on the floor by bringing the 9 month + baby to the potty when he begins to go, while saying "wait" or "potty." And use clothing, underwear, or trainers as a back-up to avoid teaching "pee wherever."

For more info on this and more about how or whether to continue diaper-free time after observation time has served its purpose, please see Doing Regular Diaper-free Time, Responsibly.

Now on to the next Step where you'll learn *what* you should do while doing naked diaper-free observation time!

On to Steps 2-6 where we learn what to do while observing.

Breakdown of Part 1, Step 2: Cue


2
CUE
Cue along with your baby every time you notice her peeing or pooing. For peeing, say "psss." For pooing, make a grunting noise like "mm, mm." This creates a sound association.

How to Make A Sound Association (Cue)

While you are observing your baby during diaper-free time (Step 1), every time you notice pee or poop coming out, make your chosen Cue.

This helps establish a sound association with your baby, and eventually, the Cue will become his prompt to release and go potty. The more you do this when you see him go, the more he will associate going to the bathroom with your noise.

Cueing in a Diaper

Sometimes you get the chance to practice cueing when your baby isn't diaper-free!

For instance, if your baby's in a diaper and you notice she's going, Cue along with her anyway, as if she were naked. If you can also get her into Position while Cueing, even better. This builds association & familiarity with both.

It's obviously much easier to notice & Cue along with a baby who is pooping – the grimaced face, staring, grunting, or squirming (or hearing it coming out) is a straight giveaway.

Which Cue Do You Want to Use?

Choose any noise of your choice to tell your baby you see him peeing or pooping.

Common Cues

- for pee, the noise of running water: "psss" or "ssss"
- for poop, grunting: "mm, mm" or "ugh, ugh"
- clicking
- blowing air on baby's head
- using the word "peepee" or "poopoo" or "potty"
- using the sign language sign for "toilet" (the letter "T" shaking)
- just letting the position be the cue
- or alternating between a pee noise and a poop noise if baby's doing both.

It doesn't matter which cue noise you use – you can even choose to only say "pssss" for both pee and poop all the time. Whichever you choose, be consistent. Over time, you may decide to change cues depending on how your baby responds as he grows. You can also use sign language alongside the cue so your baby can learn to eventually sign back to you.

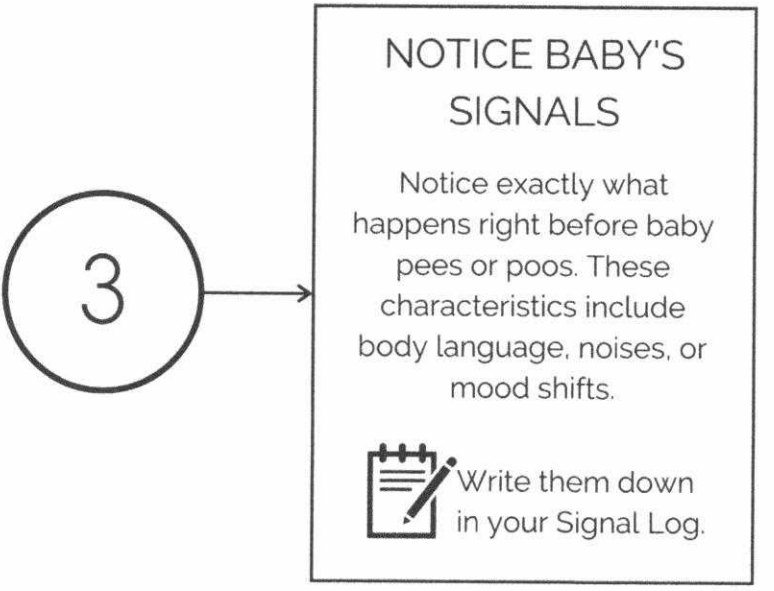
When Cueing With Noises Must Turn Into Something Else

If it doesn't feel right to make a "psss" or grunting noise while your baby is peeing or pooping, or if it seems like she's at the age where using a *word* association might make more sense than using a *sound* association (usually at around 8-9 months), cue with a word instead of a noise, or perhaps a word and a sign. This is where the "cue" becomes language, and eventually, your baby will use this word or sign as her signal to you.

You might eventually separate the cue from one thing into two things. For example, if you start out by taking baby to the potty and then saying "psss" and signing "toilet" while he goes, when he becomes more mobile you can separate it into two cues: one pointing to the bathroom or saying "potty time" when it's *time to go* and one saying the word "peepee" *while he pees* into the toilet. This can help your baby tell you he needs to go beforehand, possibly preventing the delayed signal *(I need to pee, but I already went)*.

DISCOVER MORE: For more information about sound association, listen to episode 38 of the Go Diaper Free Podcast. See Appendix 3.

BREAKDOWN OF PART 1, STEP 3: NOTICE BABY'S SIGNALS


3
NOTICE BABY'S SIGNALS
Notice exactly what happens right before baby pees or poos. These characteristics include body language, noises, or mood shifts.
Write them down in your Signal Log.

As you get used to seeing your baby eliminate and cueing along with her, the next step is to notice exactly what happens right before the pee or poop.

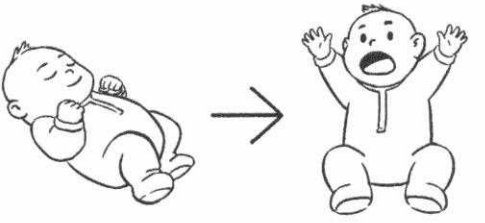
Write this down in your **Baby's Signal Log** (available on the Book Owners Website) or note it in your mind. Sometimes identifying your baby's signals is quite natural – you notice or sense a "shift" in the baby's state (body language, noises, mood) and then, voila! she pees. Her signals may be very obvious.

Sometimes you may know the signal, but the time-lapse between signal and pee/poop is so tiny that you think, "How will I ever catch anything?"

No worries. Over time, these time lapses will become longer and longer as the muscles become stronger, as the mind develops the proper pot-

tying associations (your consistency, cues, and positioning all contribute to this flow), and as your baby sees you are paying attention.

Signals are usually easier to identify with pre-poop versus pre-pee. Gaze at your little cutie during diaper-free observation and pay attention to the subtle and not-so-subtle signals that may appear.



If Your Baby Doesn't Signal

Newborn babies typically signal loud and clear because they are still acclimating to their new environment and very simply expressing their core needs (which we get to decode and differentiate). After that, things tend to change. Sometimes babies' signals are super-subtle or may seem non-existent. This is especially common during months 4-14 when babies are busy mastering other tasks. You may look and look and find nothing.

If your baby doesn't signal:

- Try observation again *after* turning off your phone, social media, and computer.
- Be patient. Those who don't signal clearly at first may start signaling when they get older or vice versa.
- Note that it's sometimes easier to pick up on signals with your second baby than your first (if you did EC with the first).
- Try babywearing. Most babies signal very clearly when in a baby carrier.
- Zoom out and check in over several days to catch the signals. Pace yourself, open your head, heart, and soul to listening on all the possible levels and see what happens.

- Try using a back-up. Some babies will only signal when they have a diaper on. How to test it out? Spend some time with your baby in a prefold without a cover, or Sumo-style (see How to Diaper with EC) or Tiny Trainers. Notice if she becomes uncomfortable or shifts at some point and try to decipher what happened right before she went.

If this doesn't work, no worries. If your baby just plain doesn't signal (or you just plain don't see it because it's so darn subtle), simply rely on timing (natural and generic) and intuition (next pages), which are the other 3 Roads to Potty Time. They work great on their own.

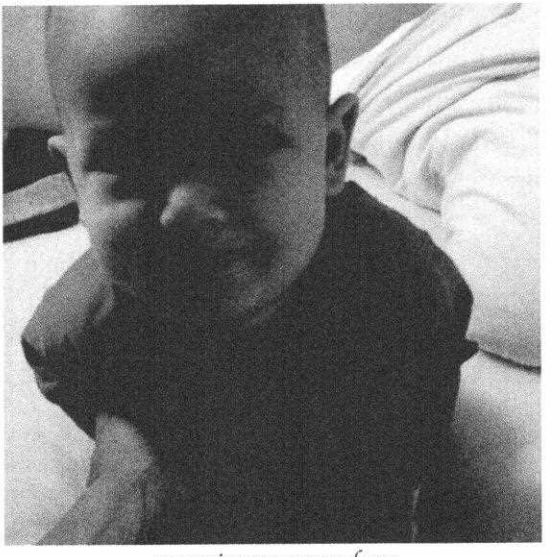
A Progression of My First Baby's Signals

Here's a sampling of my first baby's signals over the months. Your baby's signals can and will vary.

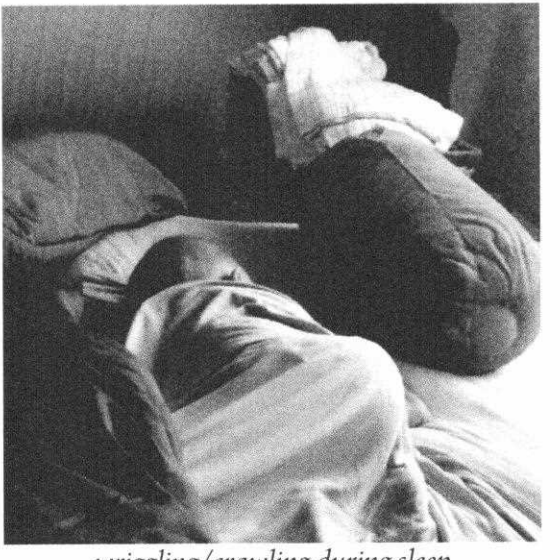
Newborn

- crying, fussiness, wriggling in bed, movement after stillness, grimacing & grunting for poop

Mobile (for him, 5 months)



my grimace poop face

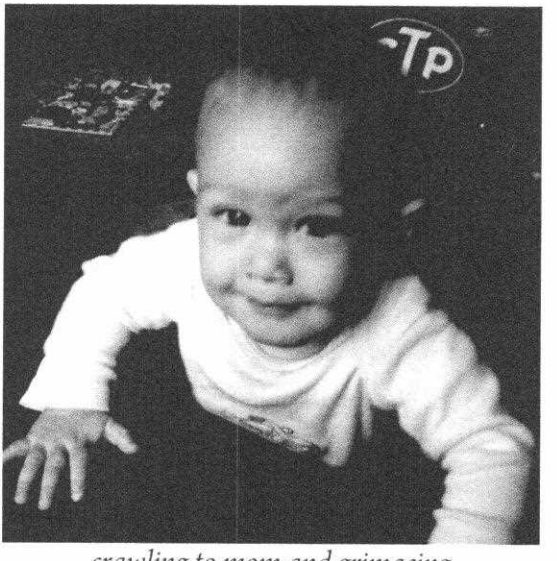


wriggling/crawling during sleep

- all of what we had for Newborn Signals plus crawling to us in bed or on the floor while fussing, wriggling/ crawling during sleep, flipping head side to side during sleep, standing up or jumping in the carrier

Very Mobile, Standing, First Steps (for him, starting at 7-10 months)

banging on the toilet



crawling to mom and grimacing

- crawling to bathroom or shower (sometimes coming back & signaling to us with a look or sound, then crawling to the bathroom again), standing at & banging on the door to be let

outside to pee, banging on the toilet, crawling to us and standing up at the back of our legs while 'talking' and then crying, saying "wee-wee," signing by waving his hands, going to a particular 'poop place' (to get into a good stand/squat position to push it out) while looking at us and grimacing/grunting, playing with penis (especially with an erection), squatting and getting very silent, blowing raspberries, getting very agitated or hyper (especially when wearing a diaper), jumping in the carrier or while standing, crying out suddenly and loudly, picking up the mini potty and looking at us, grabbing at or trying to remove his diaper or underwear

Types of Baby Signals

Different ways babies tell us they need to pee or poop:

- sudden or increased fussiness
- cry or scream
- shift from stillness to movement
- shift from movement to stillness
- squirming or wriggling (especially in bed if co-sleeping)
- for older ages during sleep, crying out, crawling in bed, talking, or flipping head from side to side
- grimace or other concentrated poop face (may look like a smile)
- popping off the breast while feeding; difficulty latching
- grunting or bearing down (may also be done squatting/standing)
- staring off into the distance
- trembling, shaking, hiccuping, yawning, rubbing face or nose, shivering, "talking," or vocalizing more loudly
- heavier breathing
- "peenie-weenie" – a partial erection that means baby boy needs to go
- grabbing at genitals, especially if squatting or looking at you or the bathroom
- blowing raspberries (trying to imitate your Cue)
- passing gas (may indicate pee, poop, or both)

- kicking legs while sitting on the potty (may indicate the need to poop)
- looking at, pointing at, or crawling to ==> you, the potty, or the bathroom
- arching back in or trying to stand in arms (or in carrier, see below)
- "phantom pee" (feels warm but baby hasn't peed)
- trying to "escape" the highchair, car seat, your lap, or the baby carrier (by standing, arching, etc.)
- trying to remove diaper or grabbing at diaper or underwear
- • sudden agitation or hyperactivity

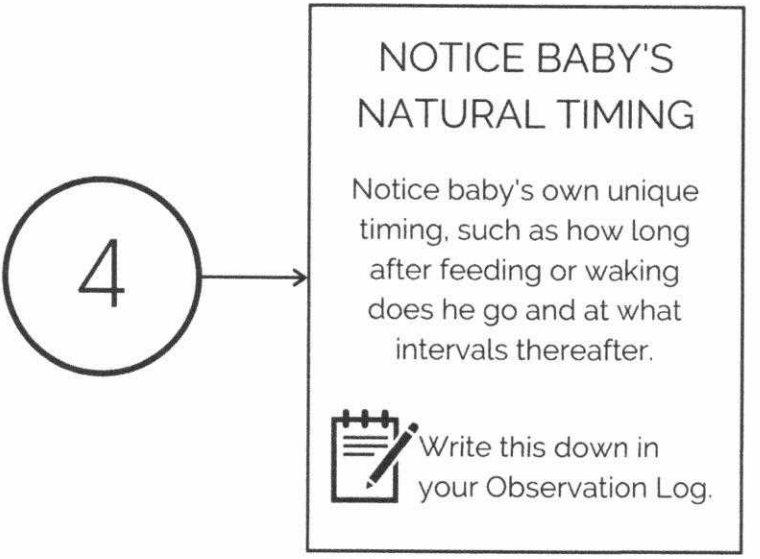
BABYWEARING SIGNALS

- sudden crying or fussiness
- wriggling
- feet pushing against you
- trying to stand up in the carrier
- bouncing
- arching out of the carrier
- "phantom pee" on either side (feels warm but baby hasn't peed)

DOWNLOAD IT: Grab "The 4 Roads to Potty Time" PDF from the Book Owners Website - it lists all these signals on one printable page for quick reference. See Appendix 2.

DISCOVER MORE: I discuss more about Signals on the Go Diaper Free YouTube channel and the Go Diaper Free Podcast, which can be found in Appendix 3.

BREAKDOWN OF PART 1, STEP 4: NOTICE BABY'S NATURAL TIMING


4
NOTICE BABY'S NATURAL TIMING
Notice baby's own unique timing, such as how long after feeding or waking does he go and at what intervals thereafter.
Write this down in your Observation Log.

To simplify this step, while observing your baby, keep an eye on the clock and **see how many minutes it takes for baby to pee or poop after these 2 events only, in this order**:

- after feeding
- after waking

...and how much time passes after that until the next pee/poop, and the next, and the next (called "intervals").

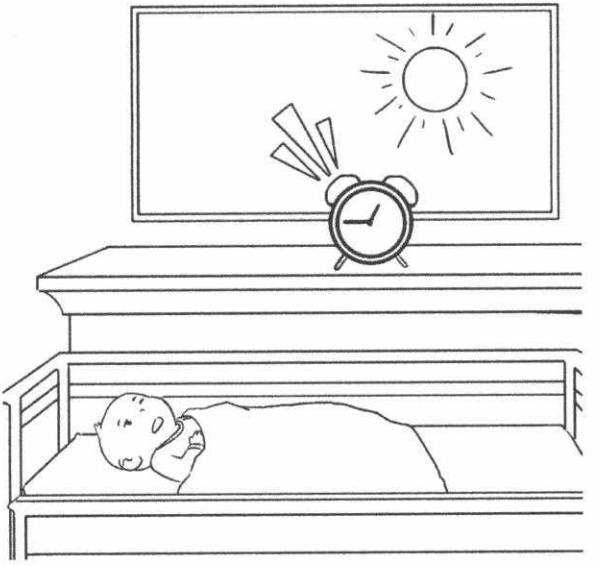
HOW TO RECORD BABY'S TIMING

Grab a watch, a pencil, and download & print your Observation Log (available in the Book Owners Website – see Appendix 2). Start by timing pees & poops after feeding, recording the intervals in your Log. Also, time pee/poop intervals after baby *wakes* from sleep. Again, start

with feeding and waking to observe & record Natural Timing – it's easier to get the hang of.

At the very least, observe & record during a half-hour per day of diaper-free observation time, starting with feeding, utilizing the Log. If you can, observe all day long for your baby's *overall patterns and rhythms,* always referring to the timing intervals as they follow eating and waking (i.e., don't just start timing randomly!).

And while you do this, please pretend like you aren't – hovering and hyperfocusing are known causes of potty resistance.



The result of this observation and recording is your baby's Natural Timing. You will discover the natural rhythms of his digestive and elimination systems, which vary slightly from baby to baby.

Remember... every baby is different.

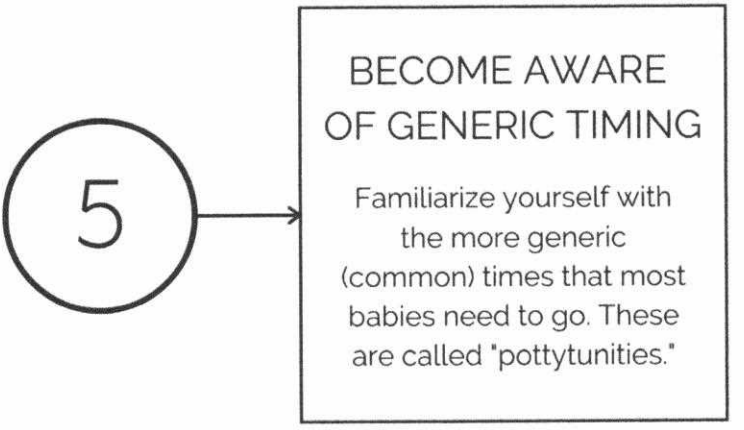
As his muscles develop and bladder grows, more time will span between his pees. **Baby's natural timing intervals will expand over**

time. As he starts solid food, his bowel movements may lessen (and harden). As time passes, your awareness of his inner clock will sharpen.

And as he learns that he can depend on you to (at least try to) help him potty, building mutual trust, he will begin to "hold it" and his natural timing will spread out a bit more. He may also hold it longer when engaged with other babies, not "bored" at home.

In the beginning months, babies pee ALL the time. It's wise to remember that the frequency *will* reduce soon and possibly lower your bar to catching every other one, not all of them.

Breakdown of Part 1, Step 5: Become Aware of Generic Timing

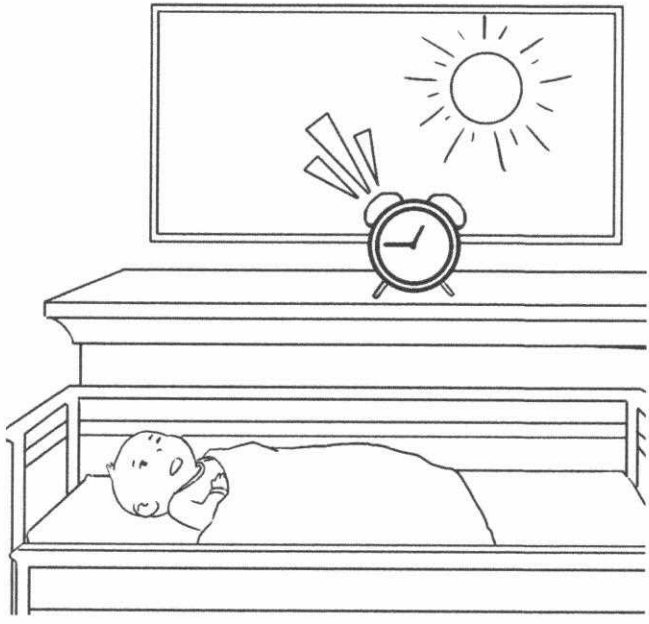

5
BECOME AWARE OF GENERIC TIMING
Familiarize yourself with the more generic (common) times that most babies need to go. These are called "pottytunities."

What is Generic Timing?

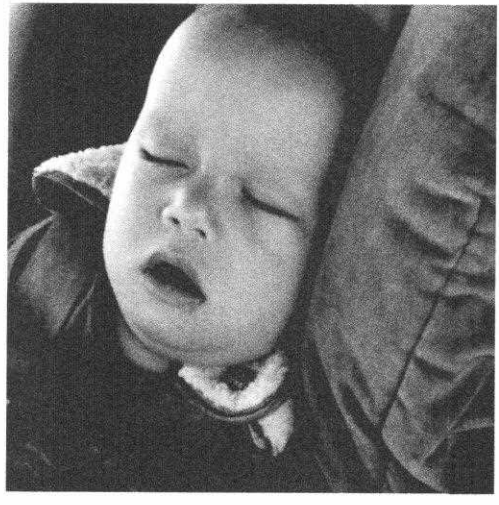
Besides your baby's unique Natural Timing (her own elimination patterns), there's something called Generic Timing or Transition Times.

Generic Timing just means that the majority of babies have to go at certain times throughout the day. This usually occurs before or after an event during which baby naturally holds it (like being in a sling, a car seat, in your arms, or asleep).* It also could be a time when you find it convenient to potty your child (like when you get to a store, or prior to gymnastics playtime). This is, more specifically, called a Transition Time.

In EC lingo, Generic Timing is fondly known as a "Pottytunity."



***Will my baby really hold it where he's supposed to?** As babies get older, some will have a miss in the car seat or highchair because they are used to "sitting" on the potty, and after a few minutes sitting there, it feels like time to release. Many babies, however, will never miss in these places because they associate the car seat or highchair with a place that's meant to stay unspoiled. *It just depends on the baby.*



So, Will My Baby Pee While She's in My Arms?

If baby's in your arms, most of the time she will not pee on you. However, ECers (including indigenous mamas) all over the world sometimes get peed on while holding a baby. It happens when the signal is missed or ignored, or perhaps baby just doesn't give one at all. She might even be experimenting.

If You Do Get Peed On...

Calmly move the baby to the other side of your body without negatively reacting. You could choose to reflect, matter-of-factly, "You just peed on me," or say nothing. Remain calm, neutral, and unmoved. Making a big deal out of it will just upset the both of you. Learn what you can from what just happened.

Get to know these common times to offer a pottytunity. If you try at one of the times listed below, you are likely to make a catch (especially first thing in the morning!).

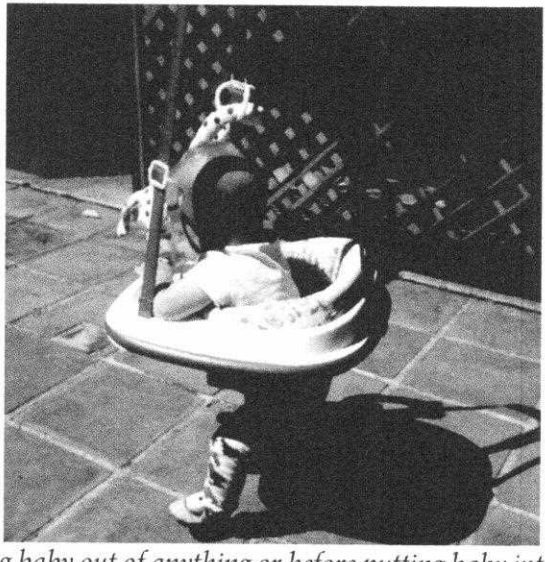
Generic Timing: Common Times That Babies Need to Go

- upon waking from sleep
- during a diaper change
- before or after a bath
- after a miss, as baby's bladder may not have fully emptied
- after taking baby out of anything she's been in for a while (car seat, stroller, baby carrier/sling, jumper, sitting aid toy, or highchair)
- before putting baby into anything she'll be in for a while (car seat, stroller, baby carrier/sling, jumper, sitting aid toy, or highchair)

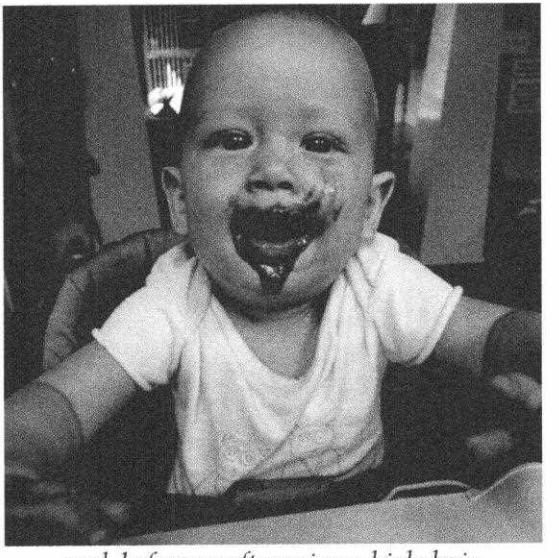
Other Pottytunities (Transition Times)

- offer potty before leaving anywhere
- offer potty upon arriving anywhere

Offer pottytunities upon waking,



when taking baby out of anything or before putting baby into anything,



and, before or after using a highchair.

THE 4 EASY CATCHES

Over the years, I've narrowed down all the pottytunities into 4 key ones – what I call the "4 Easy Catches."

You can use these as your only method of doing EC if that works for you, or (and I recommend this most) you can use these as the key "pottytunities" that you'll integrate into your baby-raising routine. And when nothing else (signals, natural timing, intuition) seems to work, you can always fall back on these four as your "sure things" (or at least your core daily potty offerings – the consistency of offering these pottytunities, even in the absence of actual catches, will pay off!).

Here they are:

1. Upon waking from sleep, take the diaper off and sit your child on the mini potty or toilet seat reducer. Say the word "potty" as you do this. This will, over time, teach her to tell you "potty" when she needs to go.

If you hear her pee or poop, say "peepee" or "poopoo" to define it for her, or say "you peed/pooped in your potty," or stay silent. It doesn't

matter whether baby actually goes potty at the wake-up pottytunity, or not, but consistency will show her that she'll get a chance to go at the same time every day (and throughout the day if she naps).

2. At every diaper change, take the diaper off and sit your child on the potty. Say "potty" as you sit him on it. If he was already wet or soiled, he may not go, but offer anyway because there may be more.

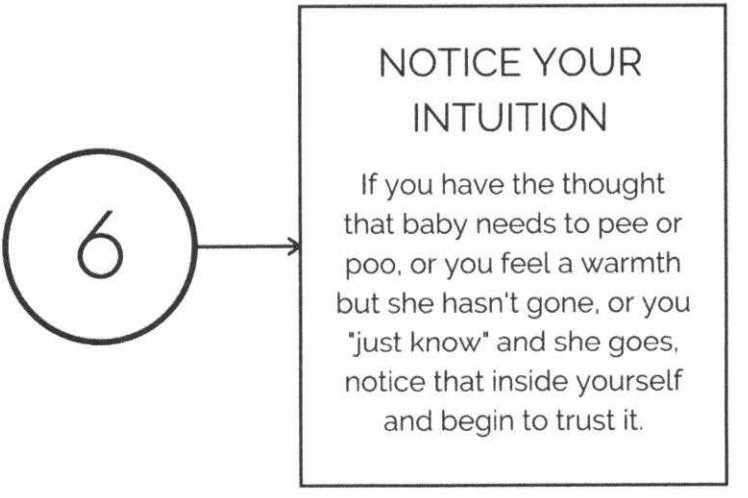
If you hear him pee or poop, say "peepee" or "poopoo" to define it for him, or say "you peed/pooped in your potty," or stay silent. It doesn't matter whether baby actually goes potty at the diaper-change potty-tunity, or not, but consistency will show him that he'll get a chance to go at the same event throughout the day, and he may begin to save some for the potty.

3. The poops. If you've always been able to tune into when your child is pooping, start catching those! If baby has already started to go or is bearing down, gently say "wait," remove the diaper or back-up, and hold her over the receptacle or place her on the potty to finish or do the whole #2 there. Grunting along with this position will encourage a poop if one is ready to emerge.

4. Ins and outs (transition times). If you babywear, offer the potty when you take baby out of the carrier. Offer after the highchair, stroller, bath, or car seat. Babies often need to go after being in one of these for so long. You can also offer before placing baby in one of these so he will be comfortable for a longer period while in it.

DISCOVER MORE: I discuss more about the 4 Easy Catches on the Go Diaper Free YouTube channel and the Go Diaper Free Podcast, which can be accessed in Appendix 3.

Breakdown of Part 1, Step 6: Notice Your Intuition


6
NOTICE YOUR INTUITION
If you have the thought that baby needs to pee or poo, or you feel a warmth but she hasn't gone, or you "just know" and she goes, notice that inside yourself and begin to trust it.

What is Intuition?

Sometimes you "just know."

Women in indigenous societies are extremely in touch with their intuition. According to the EC texts I've read, indigenous women often potty their babies nonchalantly in mid-conversation or activity. They do it in a matter-of-fact way, often responding to what an outsider might think is "nothing."

That is intuition in action, and you may have it too! Some people can pick up and act quickly upon their intuitive hunches. Some simply aren't wired that way.

What It Might Be Like...

Notice your thoughts and your misses and catches. See if the thoughts, feelings, hunches, sensations, and perhaps even visuals preceding the pee/poop correspond to your baby actually going. You might be more intuitive than you guessed.

Do you have a funny feeling that baby may need to go (or can't possibly need to go again)? Does the word "pee" or "poop" cross your mind? Are you imagining baby needing to pee? Do you suddenly have to pee yourself? Some people swear they smell pee or poop before it comes out; others have a vivid thought or insistence inside and are "sure" baby needs to go. I sometimes have dreams that the baby needs to pee and wake up to find he needs to go. **Notice your intuition and listen to it.**

If You Don't Have It

Sadly, intuition in the Western world is a buried, lost art in many cases. But luckily, as a culture, we are rediscovering this inner guidance system and beginning to trust it once again.

If you don't feel or think any of the above intuitive thoughts or feelings, don't fret! Just rely on Signals and Timing and you'll be fine. Not everyone has potty intuition (sometimes it doesn't appear until the second baby!). You may or may not have it. It's all good, either way.

Older Children Might

If you have other children, they tend to be hyper-intuitive. Listen to their intuitions as well and invite them to share a hunch that baby may need to potty.

Advice From a Sage

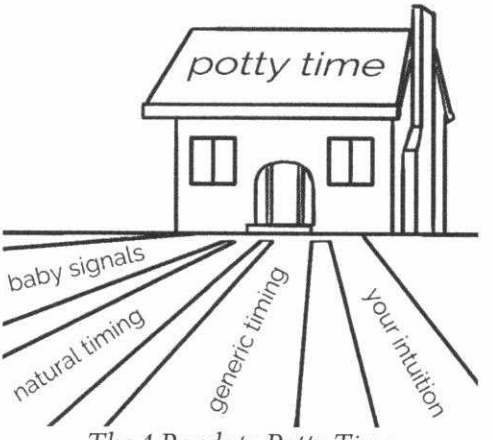
This is from a woman on the EC Yahoo! Group:

> *"Always act on sudden random potty thoughts immediately (you are usually picking up on subconscious signals)."*

TAKE A DEEP DIVE: All that said, if you can not get a handle on "when to potty," the Potty Time Master minicourse looks closely at this very common challenge. See Appendix 4.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'VE FINISHED THE BASICS, PART 1.

To summarize, you've learned there are 4 roads leading to potty time:



The 4 Roads to Potty Time

Again, you can download the one-page handout on the Book Owners Website.

After several days or weeks of practicing Part 1 and recording your notes in the Logs, download this month's sign (available in the Book Owners Website) and fill it out:

My Baby's EC This Month
(Signals & Timing fill-in-the-blank)
January-December

Hang it on your fridge to remind you (and your family) what your baby's patterns are this month, and do a new one every month thereafter, noting the inevitable changes. See Appendix 2 for these downloads.

NEXT UP: The Basics Part 2!

THE BASICS, PART 2: HOW TO POTTY YOUR BABY

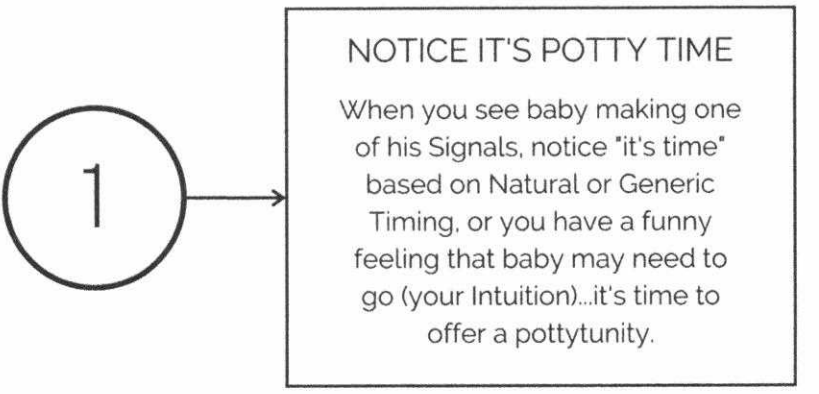
It's time to start pottying! Your goal is to practice responding to the Signals, Timing, and Intuition you just learned about.

You will begin to Position and Cue your baby and learn how to adjust your style and rhythm through experimentation with your baby.

On the next page is an overview of how to actually take your baby to the potty, start to finish, with more details on the following pages.

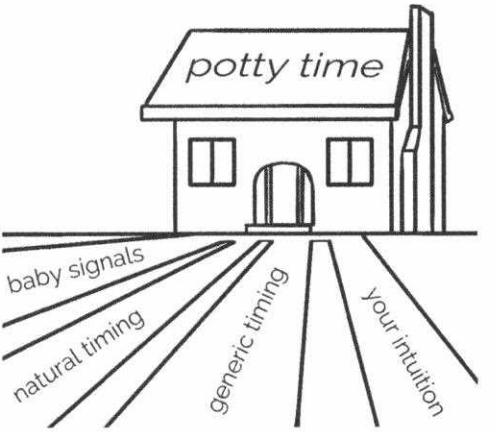
Baby's Signal
Baby's Natural Timing
Generic Timing
Your Intuition
1
NOTICE IT'S POTTY TIME
When you see baby making one of his Signals, notice "it's time" based on Natural or Generic Timing, or you have a funny feeling that baby may need to go (your Intuition)...it's time to offer a pottytunity.
2
ACKNOWLEDGE, UNDRESS & GO TO POTTY SPACE
Verbally or nonverbally acknowledge it's potty time and undress baby while moving to the proper space.
3
POSITION & CUE
Gently put baby in position of choice (see **Positions**) and make cue noise(s), such as "psss" for pee, "mm, mm" for poo, or both.
4
BE PATIENT...
If you feel like there may be more, either keep baby in position and continue cueing or take a break and resume position and cue in a moment. It is common for babies to pee or poo in spurts or stages.
5
NOTICE WHEN BABY SAYS "I'M FINISHED"
She'll either stop going, cry, fuss, arch her back, or stretch out her legs when finished.
6
REFLECT OR SAY NOTHING
After a catch, either simply reflect matter-of-factly "You went pee/poo in the potty" or simply say nothing, smiling inside and out. You can add in a "Yay" or "Wow" to show your pleasure that baby went in the proper place.
7
CLEAN UP
Clean up baby & potty, replace clothing or diaper (if any), and move on with your day.

Breakdown of Part 2, Step 1: Notice It's Potty Time


1
NOTICE IT'S POTTY TIME
When you see baby making one of his Signals, notice "it's time" based on Natural or Generic Timing, or you have a funny feeling that baby may need to go (your Intuition)...it's time to offer a pottytunity.

How to Know It's Potty Time

Now that you're in Part 2, the Potty Time arena, you can put into action what you learned and observed in Part 1. But how do you know when to potty? Well, the 4 events you mastered in Part 1 may mean it's potty time.



1. Baby's SIGNAL
2. Baby's NATURAL TIMING
3. GENERIC TIMING or TRANSITION TIME
4. Your INTUITION

How About Some Role-Play Everyone?

Here are 6 sample scenarios to help you see what leads to potty time. #1 is about Signaling, #2 about Natural Timing, #3 shows a combination of both Signaling and Natural Timing, #4 is about Generic Timing, #5 is about Intuition, and, finally, #6 illustrates a combination of Intuition and Natural Timing.

1. So you're sitting around and your baby is playing nicely, and suddenly, she gets grumpy and cries. That's a **Signal** you've come to know, and you see if she needs to potty.

2. Your baby is playing nicely after you fed her. It's been about 10 minutes, and you know she usually needs to go by now. You offer her the chance to potty, knowing her usual **Natural Timing**.

3. You fed your baby 10 minutes ago and she is playing nicely until suddenly, her energy shifts, she gets grumpy, and she cries. You put the two together: (a) she just ate (**Natural Timing**), and (b) she is **Signaling** you. You offer her the potty.

4. You are about to transfer your baby from the baby carrier to the car seat after grocery shopping. You offer her a pottytunity first (based on **Generic Timing** or **Transition Times**).

When you get home 15 minutes later, you offer another pottytunity upon getting her out of the car seat (also based on **Generic Timing** or **Transition Times**).

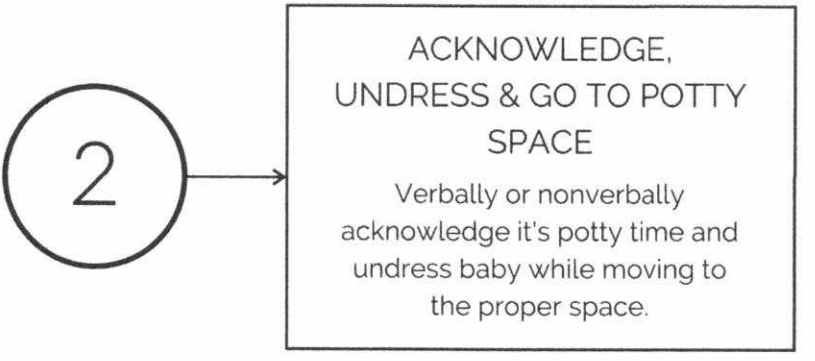
5. You are carrying your baby around the house without his diaper on, when suddenly, you feel warm and wet as if he's soaked you! You move him to the other hip and find yourself to be completely dry (this was a "phantom" pee, a.k.a. **Intuition**). You offer him a pottytunity and he goes!

6. You are cooking dinner and have the thought "the baby needs to pee" (**Intuition**). It's been about 20 minutes since she last breastfed,

which is her usual time to potty (**Natural Timing**), but the thought "the baby needs to pee" keeps nagging you (**Intuition**) until you leave the stove and offer the baby a Pottytunity. Voila! She pees.

Remember: These 4 events may shift over time. With every miss and every catch, remain open to change & evolution.

Breakdown of Part 2, Step 2: Acknowledge, Undress, & Go to Potty Space


2
ACKNOWLEDGE, UNDRESS & GO TO POTTY SPACE
Verbally or nonverbally acknowledge it's potty time and undress baby while moving to the proper space.

Acknowledging It's Time To Potty

There are several ways to acknowledge to your baby that it's time to potty, that you're working on taking her to the bathroom, and to just hang on a second and she'll experience the ultimate release and relief. Here are three:

1. Verbally: Note we don't "ask" our babies if they need to pee. We simply make a statement, like: "I'm thinking you may need to pee. Let's go to the bathroom and see." "Let's go peepee!" "It's Peepee Time!!"

2. Nonverbally: Use sign language to communicate the question or expression. The most common sign for pottying is the ASL sign for "toilet" (it's the letter "T," shaking). To sign "toilet," make your hand into a fist with your thumb sticking out between your pointer and middle fingers, shaking side to side like this:

3. Mentally: Think a thought to yourself like: I will take you to the bathroom now and see if you need to potty.

The mental way (#3) is what I assume to be the most common way people in intact cultures acknowledge potty time. They generally don't make a big deal about it. They just have the thought, offer the potty, and move on with their day in a matter-of-fact way, usually without a word. It's likely unconscious.

In the US, we like to speak about most things with our children. Some use way more words than others. I don't think talking or being silent hurts, either way. It's up to you and your parenting style to decide how/if/when to acknowledge that it's potty time. Please just note this acknowledgment is optional.

Undress

This one's pretty straight-forward. Get whatever's in the way (if anything) off of your baby. Diaper, pants, training pants, undies – get 'em off swiftly but gently. Check for wetness as you do this.*

You will learn the key to "dressing for success" with experience. There are ways to keep your baby warm, comfortable, and (if you prefer) contained (with a diaper or training pants) WHILE still making it easy to potty him.

For more on what types of clothing work best with EC & where to get them, please see the Supply List. For more on diapering as a back-up, see the section called How to Diaper with EC.

*CHECK FOR WETNESS Now...

If baby had on bottoms, check for wetness WHILE you undress him to see if you "missed" some or all the pee.

Offer the potty anyway, even if the diaper is a little wet. Any wetness means he either "pre-peed" (a little trickle came out while he was trying

to wait) or you missed the last pee and he was too busy to tell you, and now it's time for a second pee. However, if you notice baby protests against the next step (Position & Cue), AND his diaper feels wet, you might have missed the whole thing. Re-diaper and try again next time.

Take Baby to Potty Space

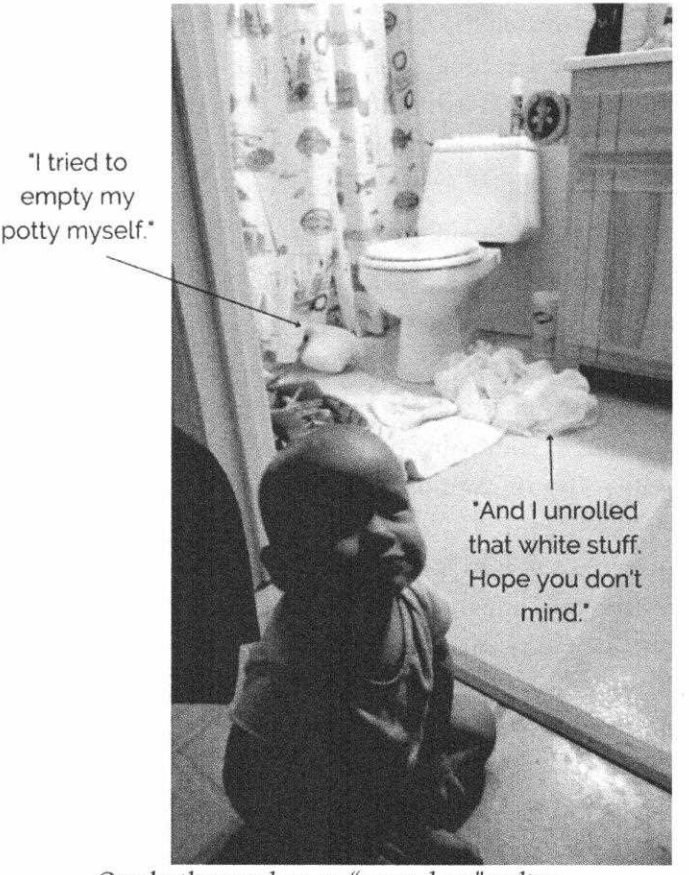
Where you take baby to pee/poop (Environment) and in what (Receptacle) is your choice. Some options for both are listed below.

It's unnecessary to take baby to the same space every time, especially in the early months. Your baby may change preferences over time, so keep a few creative ideas in your pocket about where to potty.

If you potty in a public space (indoors or out), try to find and use a public restroom. Using the classic EC hold over a public toilet or sink is an easy and sanitary method (so long as you clean the sink). If you must potty outside or in a mini potty somewhere, please be discreet and clean up after yourselves.

Possible Potty *Environments*

- bathroom (in toilet, mini potty, sink, shower, bathtub)
- on bed (in a receptacle, of course – typically a top hat potty)
- in the living room (in a mini potty)
- outside/in nature (backyard, park, side of road)
- within the parked car or next to the car (in a top hat potty, bowl, etc, or on the concrete or grass next to a parked car)
- in a public bathroom (sink or toilet)
- side of bed (into a shallow receptacle)



Our bathroom has an "open door" policy.

POSSIBLE POTTY *RECEPTACLES*

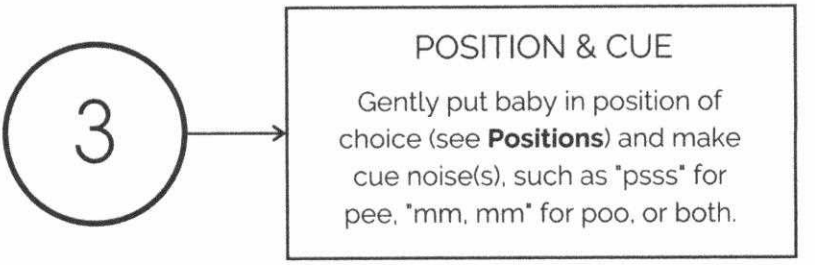
(see the Supply List for more info)

- grown-up toilet, held over it (with or without a mirror or sticker stuck to inside of lid)
- grown-up toilet with toilet seat reducer
- sink (bathroom or kitchen)
- bathtub (good for boys)
- stand-up shower (also good for boys)
- mini potty
- potty chair
- top hat potty
- disposable, cloth/plastic-lined, or wool puddle pad

- any bowl-like container that works for you (i.e., mixing bowl, tupperware bowl, chamber pot, etc.)
- shallow container (such as a wide rectangular or circular basin with low edges) for use next to bed on floor
- water bottle or jar (boys)
- frisbee or whatever else is laying around in your car

DISCOVER MORE: Learn when to transition from in-arms to a potty on podcast episode 39, or from the mini potty to the big toilet on episode 40. See Appendix 3.

Breakdown of Part 2, Step 3: Position & Cue


3
POSITION & CUE
Gently put baby in position of choice (see **Positions**) and make cue noise(s), such as "psss" for pee, "mm, mm" for poo, or both.

How to Position & Cue

In Part 1, you practiced Sound Association to get your baby used to the Cue noise you make while she goes.

In Part 2, this Cue now reminds her that it's okay to loosen those sphincters. It helps her practice releasing at will. With a little repetition, you'll get her used to associating both the Cue & the Position with the action of pottying, and she'll think:

"When I'm in this Position and I hear that Cue, it's cool to pee!"

This is the "Classic EC hold."

So put your baby in Position and make your Cue noise.

Tip: If you relax while you hold and cue your baby, she will relax and release more easily.

Gently hold your baby under the thighs, supporting his back and neck with your chest and belly.

For a photo gallery of various other positions & how to use them, please go to the Positions Gallery section.

If You're Too Late, Position & Cue in Diaper

If you couldn't get his pants off in time, or you're not near an appropriate potty place/receptacle, simply position and cue *while your baby is wearing his diaper.*

This maintains the sound association. Some people talk to the baby about why he must go in his pants. "Sweetheart, there is nowhere I can potty you right now and I need you to pee in your diaper. I promise I will change it soon." Then change the diaper as soon as you are able.

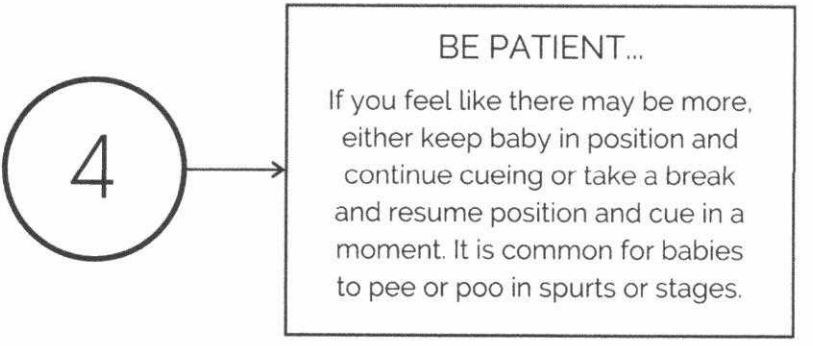
Remember that your baby's preferred Position and Cue may shift over time. Your baby will communicate to you when he's ready for a change by arching his back, fussing, or not responding in the usual way. If you're pretty sure he needs to go, he may be giving you a sign you need to get creative and evolve your strategies as his world expands.

Experiment with Position, Environment, Receptacle, and Cue noise. Whereas before you just needed to say "psss" and he would instantly pee, now you may need to run the water, or take him to the big potty, sing a relaxing song, or just say, "peepee."

Remember that sometimes he just doesn't need to go. Perhaps he's able to hold it longer now than before. Or, maybe he's experimenting with how long he can hold it and where he goes.

Just remember: Never force your baby to stay in a position that he's strongly resisting. Gently try something else (Position, Environment, Receptacle, Cue), run some water, sing a calming song, or wait until later when it's time again.

Breakdown of Part 2, Step 4: Be Patient...


4
BE PATIENT...
If you feel like there may be more, either keep baby in position and continue cueing or take a break and resume position and cue in a moment. It is common for babies to pee or poo in spurts or stages.

Patience with Pee

Pee can emerge in just one stream, one session, or it can come out in a few sessions, with seconds or minutes between streams. It doesn't matter if the bladder's full, the baby will either release all of it at once or do it bit by bit.

Why? Well, it could be on purpose, based on sensation, related to breathing, related to the level of relaxation, or related to the amount of stimuli in the environment. It could also be the baby's personal "style" or age/stage.

From one full bladder, a baby may pee a bit now, more 2 minutes from now, and again 4 minutes from now, especially in the morning. Take a deep breath. Note your baby's tendencies.

Patience with Poop

Pooping commonly happens in stages. Obviously, every baby's different, but there are some reasons that stages occur.

Exclusively breastfed babies' poop is typically runny. It can take several minutes to get it all out as it takes some time for gravity to pitch in. Also, pooping is a brand-new thing for a brand-new baby. It takes some getting used to.

After beginning solids, babies' poop becomes sausage-like and comes out like a Play-Doh Factory. Depending on your baby's system, it can still take a couple "sessions" to get it all out.

DISCOVER MORE: Listen to podcast episode 45 on starting solids. See Appendix 3.

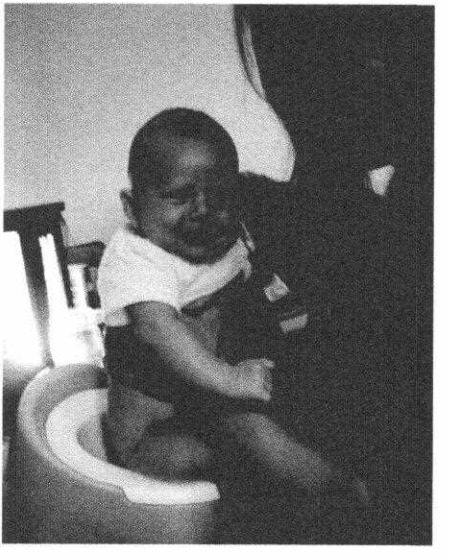
Pooping in Stages: If you're using the classic EC position (as drawn above), take the baby out of that position between poops. This will allow the poop to flow down the colon and will give baby's thighs (and your muscles) a break.

You can hold her off to one side on one arm or find another good resting position that keeps the poop off your shirt. If you've got a *younger baby* on a mini potty, simply be patient. Make eye contact, smile, ask her if she's got any more poopoos.

If you know any infant massage techniques (such as gently "moving" the poop around the colon with a light stroke of the thumb from [looking at baby, facing each other] lower left up to upper left, then over to the upper right and down the right side), you can gently use them between pushes.

Toward what you believe is the end of the poop session ask, "more poopoos or are you all finished?" If you are consistent with this latter part of the phrase, she will hear "are you all finished?" and realize that poop time is almost over and it's time to get all remaining poops out.

Over time, she may try to wrap it up when hearing your communication.



Nothing happening...baby not relaxing? Take deep breaths with baby (to calm you both) or sing a potty song. Other parents like to engage their own stomach muscles while they grunt their cue. Some believe when the baby feels the muscles contract (as she's up against your stomach in the classic EC position) it helps her push and release. You can also offer your baby privacy by averting your attention to something else while she goes.

How Long to Hold Baby in Position

You may be wondering how long is too long to hold your baby in the potty position, waiting for him to go. The answer is "when it feels like it's been too long, it's probably been too long." I typically wait no more than 5 minutes, and usually can tell if my baby needs to go within a minute or two.

If you have a hunch that something's coming but are tired of switching positions, waiting, or walking around, you can put the diaper back on and keep an ear out for another sign it may be time to go.

Mobile Babies

Like I mentioned above, some older babies are so busy exploring that they only pause for a *moment* to push a little bit of poop out and then they're off!

When baby can sit on the potty on her own, and crawl off on her own when she's finished with one push, empty the mini potty and keep an eye out for additional cues (squatting, grunting, looking at you) and put her back on the potty if she has another set of poop coming. (Again, keep that bathroom door shut if you've got one who might escape.)

I've done this up to four times in a row with a 9 month old! He crawled off between each set and, a minute later, signaled again with a squat and grimace, then I'd sit him on the potty and he'd poop some more.

If you can engage her in some way or sing to her, you may catch her attention for the duration of a few poop-pushes on the potty. I like to sing "Twinkle, Twinkle" and do sign language with it. My babies become mesmerized for a good 2 pushes.

You can also switch from a mini potty to the big toilet with a toilet reducer on it. This keeps baby on a less-escapable receptacle. Turning your back or leaving the room for a moment (if baby can safely sit on the big toilet with a reducer) will provide privacy.

DISCOVER MORE: Check out podcast episode 40 for when to transition from a mini potty to the big toilet in Appendix 3.

Otherwise, just know that there may be more later, and hopefully, your baby will signal again later. Or perhaps you'll catch on to that "I need to poop again" body language.

Morning Pees and Poops

Babies and adults emit a hormone while sleeping that keeps them from peeing and pooping in their sleep. This is called the Anti-Diuretic Hormone or ADH. When humans wake up, the hormone wears off, the bladder fills, and the bowels get ready to emerge (if any). This is why practicing the "wake-up pee" can be so effective with EC.

If you breastfeed at night, your baby's morning pee may come out in spurts that can be up to 5-10 minutes apart. Do a timing session and observe your baby in the morning, diaper-free. You may be surprised at how many sessions it takes for his bladder to empty!

(Others are going to pee like a racehorse in the morning and be done with it within seconds.)

Babies will generally need to poop first thing in the morning (especially at very young ages, typically at early hours like 4-6 AM). Notice patterns with your younger baby and be patient while she gets that morning poop out in sleepy stages, and possibly returns to sleep after.

Breakdown of Part 2, Step 5: Notice When Baby Says "I'm Finished"

How to Know When Baby's Finished Pottying

Your baby will tell you when he's finished pottying. Some "I'm finished" signs include:

- crying
- fussing
- stretching out legs
- arching back
- becoming active after being still
- stopping peeing and pooping (the very young baby may not signal she is finished, other than stopping)
- falling asleep (especially newborns).

If Baby Didn't Go, Says "I'm Finished," You Stop, and Then Baby Goes on the Floor 2 Minutes Later

Your baby may be experimenting with where and when she potties. She may be able to hold it longer than she used to. She may not have liked the Environment, Position, Receptacle, or Cue you were using (even if she's liked it in the past).

Perhaps if you try a different one next time, she won't just go on the floor after you take her off the potty. (Then again, she still might pee on the floor 2 minutes later. She might just be testing it out.)

The best thing to do in this situation is an hour or two of naked observation (Part 1) where you re-learn her natural timing. Get the information, then adjust your offerings.

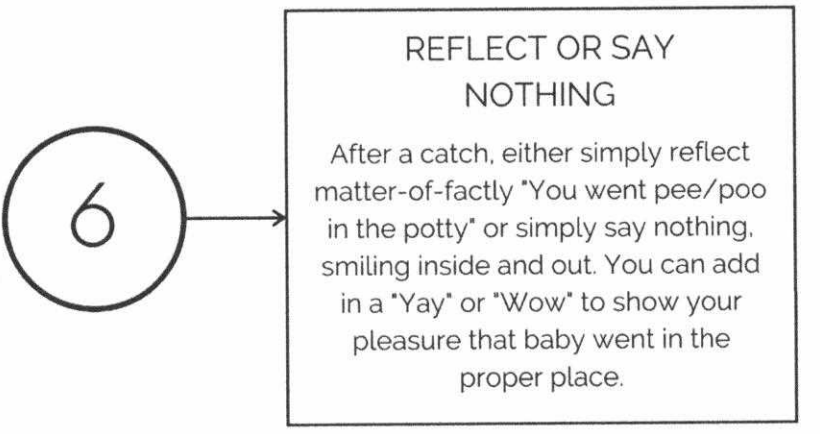
If Baby Is Saying "I'm Finished" but Hasn't Pottied Yet...and You're Pretty Sure He has to Go

If the timing tells you he should need to potty, or he is giving very clear signals, and yet he seems to be protesting by the above "I'm Finished" actions, this could mean you'll need to change it up a bit. Shift the scenery. Get creative.

Gently try something else (Position, Environment, Receptacle, Cue), run some water, or sing a calming song. Walk around for a little bit while baby is still bottomless, relaxing and pretending to just be walking, and then return to offer again. If this doesn't work, simply wait until you receive another Signal or believe it may be Time again.

Remember: Never force your baby to stay in a position that he's resisting. Gently try something else (Position, Environment, Cue, Receptacle), run some water, sing a calming song, or wait until later when it's time again.

Breakdown of Part 2, Step 6: Reflect or Say Nothing


6
REFLECT OR SAY NOTHING
After a catch, either simply reflect matter-of-factly "You went pee/poo in the potty" or simply say nothing, smiling inside and out. You can add in a "Yay" or "Wow" to show your pleasure that baby went in the proper place.

What to Say When You Catch a Pee/Poop

Lots of people have differing opinions on this. Some people praise the baby, some people praise the action, others reflect what they see/saw, others state their pleasure, and still others say nothing.

After much research, experience, and thought, I recommend that you either (1) Reflect & Notice, or (2) Say Nothing. Before I get to those, here's a bit about why I no longer praise my babies.

Why I No Longer Praise

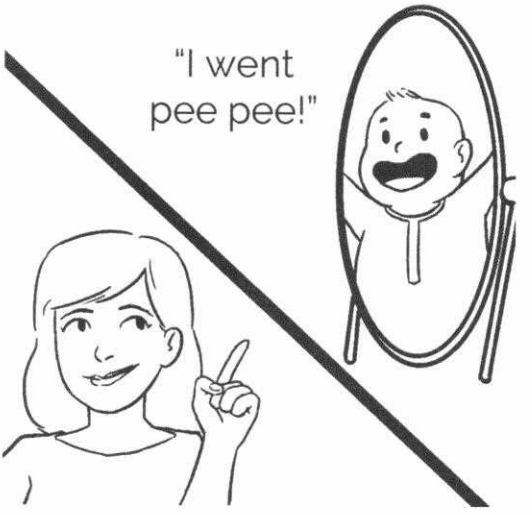
After a catch, I used to praise and [albeit positively] judge. In the beginning, I would excitedly say, "Good peepee/poopoo!" and praise my first baby for going. You can see proof of this in most of the videos I taped before I had this epiphany.

After about 5 months, I reassessed this choice and decided to stop praising and start reflecting. Why? Well, I learned that as we praise children (for anything) they begin to do things to receive our praise and thus become extrinsically motivated. My hopes for my babies are the opposite: I want them to be motivated from within themselves.

Further, when I would say that a peepee is "good," I implied there is also a "bad" version out there. The child may think, *If I don't do it "right," am I "bad?"* This type of positive or negative language comes across as criticism, even if well-intentioned.

I did not do any permanent damage – my tone was appropriate. We all say "good job," right? It's okay sometimes, I guess. But going to the bathroom is a natural process stemming from an inner motivation to take care of one's hygiene and is not meant to happen out of a motivation to please you.

1. Reflect & Notice



The alternative to praise is reflecting or noticing. This means describing what you see baby do without making a big deal out of it. You can even notice how *you* feel inside and express that. Some examples of how to notice and reflect are:

"You're peeing."
"You went pee/poop in the sink."
"You peed on the carpet. Peepee belongs in the bathroom."
"You pooped in the potty. I'm excited. That's where poop goes."

"You feel relief because you peepeed."
"What a relief to pee. It feels good to pee outside of your diaper."
"You went poopoo, ahhhh." (the noise "Ahhh" reflects the feeling of release)

Even words as simple as "Yay!" or "Wow!" will communicate the satisfaction you feel when she pees in the desired place.

2. Say Nothing
In cultures where infant pottying is the norm, most parents say nothing upon a successful potty. It's expected that the baby should ask to go pee, and the parent should take her (or that an unspoken intuition should guide it all). It's not really an exciting event because it is so socially ingrained as part of the "norm" and thus there's never a big deal made of pottying. It's a natural given.

Laurie Boucke writes in *Infant Potty Training* that some parents in intact cultures become upset about a miss in the middle of the kitchen, after the baby is old enough to "know better," but never do they become upset *with* the child, nor make her feel wrong. They are only displeased with the activity. This displeasure *clearly & honestly* demonstrates to the child which behaviors are acceptable and which are not.

Which Way Is "Correct?"

Simply weigh whether you want to raise your child to be intrinsically (reflect or say nothing) or extrinsically (praise) motivated. Many of us have been conditioned to say it, so if "good job" slips out, it probably won't obliterate baby's internal desire to do what's socially expected. But avoid "good boy" or "good girl."

What You Could Say After a Miss

If you've had a miss (i.e., baby peed before you could offer her the potty), acknowledge that by saying something like, "You peepeed in your pants. Let me know next time, and I will help you put it in the potty."

Be easy on yourself. It's not the end of the world if you have a miss. You want to model the kind of self-love that your baby will have, right? Be nice to Mom/Dad.

Ask yourself, "Now what did Mommy/Daddy learn from that?" **The best information is gathered by a miss!**

What You Could Say After a Mis-guess

If you have mis-guessed his need to potty (i.e., he didn't have to go after all), acknowledge that gently. You can say to your baby, "Oh, you don't need to go peepee after all. Okay."

Never feel like you have to apologize; you didn't do anything wrong by offering. So long as you are gentle, open, and non-coercive, you are trying your best.

Next, ask yourself, "Now what did Mommy/Daddy learn from that?" **Great information can be gathered from a mis-guess!**

Gratitude After a Catch

After a smooth interaction (baby signals, I offer potty, he pees) I often say, "Thank you for letting Mama know you had to go pee." If it feels right for you to do that, gratitude is an awesome thing to model for your children.

Breakdown of Part 2, Step 7: Clean Up

How to Clean Up

Clean-up is generally easier than changing a diaper (especially versus cleaning feces off of your baby's skin).

Baby

- If a pee, blot (do not wipe hard) with a towel if you want to (pee is sterile).
- If a poop and you are near a sink, rinse baby's bum by scooping warm water onto it with your hand & towel blot dry.
- Alternatively, use wipes (disposable or water-moistened cloth wipe) but dry the skin afterward by blotting with a soft cloth (dry skin helps prevent diaper rash).
- Sometimes no wipe or splash is necessary, even if there was a poop (if it was swift and clean).

Potty

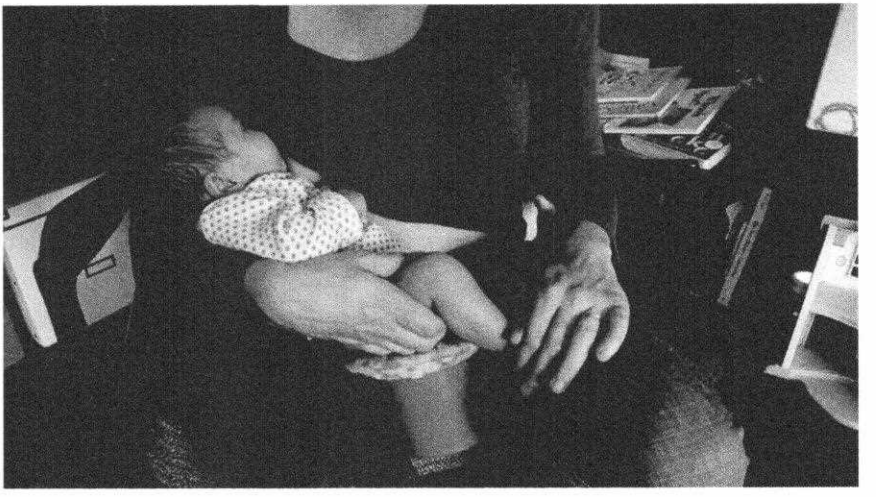
- Dump; (if a poop) rinse with soap and water; wipe or air-dry.
- Periodically sanitize with a sanitizing wipe or spray.

A Few Cleanup Tips

- Breastfed babies' poop is typically runny and easily rinses down the sink (if you don't mind). You can also place a top hat or mini potty in your sink to catch the poop, if it has a flat surface.
- If you use the sink or a mini-potty, always use a little water to rinse it and periodically wipe with a nontoxic antibacterial wipe (or use a spray and wipe).

- Some babies relax (and potty more easily) with the sound of the water running. You can warm up the water while she potties and help her relax at the same time, so when she's finished her bum gets rinsed with nice, warm water.
- For nighttime pottying, some folks leave a rag, small towel, or cloth diaper in the mini potty or top hat potty that soaks up the pee each time. This will help you avoid late-night spills and make clean-up easier.
- Instead of wiping a newborn baby's sensitive skin with toilet paper, gently blot with a soft cloth wipe or a potty-time-only hand towel.
- If you are outdoors and have discreetly pottied your baby, the pee will evaporate. However, to dispose of poop: if it's runny breastmilk poop, place earth matter (sand, soil, leaves, grass) on top of it; if it's solid, pick up the poop in a bag, tie it in a knot, and place it in a trash can. Make it a habit to carry biodegradable dog poop bags with you, such as BioBags, just for this use.
- If you are on an outing and baby poops in the top hat potty, cover the opening with a wipe and dump at the next public restroom. Some folks put a yogurt container in it and pop the lid on if they catch a poop while out and about. For pee, discreetly dump it on the ground or in a bush and it will evaporate (or wait until you find the next toilet).

Congratulations!
You've Finished Learning the Basics, Parts 1 and 2!



Remember, EC is about two-way communication. Your baby is teaching you yet another language of his, and you are learning how to engage with your baby in this way. The goal is not perfection, **just keep focusing on listening & remaining curious to see what works best for both of you.**

Stay committed and confident. Seek help in the Private Support Group (gain access at godiaperfree.com/ECowners) for anything you've got a question about. Yay – I'm excited for you!

What's Next?

Next, we'll review some Mobile Baby and Young Toddler Modifications and Maintenance tips. If your baby is 6-18 months old, please read this section.

Then, we will wrap up the How to EC chapter with the Positions Gallery.

After that, Chapter 2 covers Unique Situations + How-to's, including 7 unique situations plus nighttime EC, part-time EC, diapers and diaper-

free time, and the building blocks of potty independence (or how to wrap things up).

Following that is Chapter 3, the Philosophy and background part of the book, followed by Chapter 4, Troubleshooting. In the appendices, you'll find the Supply List, Book Owners Website info, resource and reference lists, and a list of my other work.

Mobile Baby + Young Toddler Modifications and Maintenance

In this section, I'll cover some additional mobile baby modifications you can add to what you've just learned in The Basics. Obviously, some aspects of The Basics Parts 1 and 2 will need to be tweaked to work, in real life, with a mobile baby or toddler! Since mobile babies differ from pre-mobile babies, this section will help you wrap your head around how EC will shift for the movers and shakers.

I will also cover maintenance – how to keep doing EC once your baby has become mobile and turns into a young toddler.

If your baby is *not* yet mobile (i.e., crawling, cruising, walking), you can *skip this section* for now and simply use The Basics. When your baby becomes mobile, revisit this section at that time (or read it now to get a preview of what's to come).

If your baby IS mobile (is crawling, cruising, walking), *welcome to your additional instructions!*

But before we really dive in, I'd like to briefly mention...

The Optional Hybrid Plan for 12-18 months

If your baby is 12-18 months old, is super-advanced/active/aware/expressive/mobile, and maybe you'd like to breeze through EC without doing a 3-day potty training bootcamp, a blended *EC/potty training experience* might be a good fit. If this is you, please visit the Book Owners Website to download the Hybrid Plan for Young Toddlers at godiaperfree.com/ECowners. It is a "hybrid" of EC and the non-coercive potty training method found in my other book, and it is a good match for some babies/parents. *If you do the Hybrid Plan, you can skip this mobile baby section or just use it for additional ideas.*

If this is not you, or you feel confused or doubtful about this mysterious Hybrid Plan, no worries. *You've still got a mobile baby, and you will read this section!* Stick to pure EC with your 6-18-month mobile baby. Do The Basics Parts 1 and 2 like you just learned and then add in these modifications and maintenance tips, wrapping it up with the section called The Building Blocks to Potty Independence.

(In case you're wondering, this is exactly how I work with my mobile babies and wrap it up with "pure EC." But it doesn't really matter which path you choose, as long as it works for you. The Hybrid Plan, pure EC, or some EC and then wrapping up with an actual potty training experience – they are all viable options. We'll cover that more in the section called The Building Blocks to Potty Independence.)

Alright. That said, here are the mobile baby and young toddler modifications – and some ideas on maintenance for after you've begun EC and your baby has become mobile.

Observation

As mentioned in The Basics Part 1, observing a mobile baby will take a bit of modification. You can either do this outdoors or with a backup on your baby, such as Tiny Trainers or a sumo style cloth diaper. The important bit is to gather the timing and signaling information, so modify as needed.

Sound Association

Instead of using noises like "psss" and "mm mm," a mobile baby may respond better to a word or phrase, and to sign language (which baby may begin to initiate starting at approximately 8 months). Use whatever works and feels right to both of you.

Diapers or not?

When you're starting EC with a mobile baby or your baby becomes mobile after having done EC, you might wonder if you're supposed to

use diapers or not. Some parents stop using daytime diapers when baby is getting all his poop in the potty, even if baby is not walking yet. This is a valid option.

However, most parents (including me) use "walking" as a yardstick. If your baby is not yet walking, you might want to wait until she starts walking to permanently ditch the awake-time diapers. Meanwhile, dress her in whichever back-up helps her signal best.

If your baby is already walking, after you get comfortable doing EC together you might transition him into underwear during the day and use a cloth or biodegradable diaper back-up at night and during naps. American mothers typically did this in the mid-1900s when they had to handwash cloth diapers. Once the baby mastered walking, the awake-time diapers were phased out pretty quickly.

After ditching the diapers, you might use cotton training pants or skip them altogether – sometimes they feel similar to diapers, sometimes they are super-helpful. Definitely skip the PullUps - they *are* diapers! And do NOT go back to awake-time diapers (unless you're doing a re-set, which we'll cover in a sec). Imagine that going back to diapers is simply not an option, and you will make things work.

DISCOVER MORE: See the section When to Ditch the Diapers for more information about this process. My blog article "The Ultimate Guide to EC Backups" explains which backups are best used when, including what I used with my 5 babies over time. Last, podcast #41 is about when to move from diapers to undies. See Appendix 3.

Misses

Moving forward past The Basics with a mobile baby, if/when a miss happens, patiently and briefly say, "Pee goes in the potty. Let me know and I can help you." As baby turns into a toddler, enlist him in clean-up duty and have him participate in changing into dry clothing.

SIGNALS/PROMPTING/CUEING

After you've begun EC and have hit the mobile stage, you will start to more actively reinforce baby's part of the communication process. This is just like when you start feeding baby solid foods, naming the food items, teaching the "hungry" and "thirsty" signs and words, teaching "all done," and helping baby to identify and express what she's thinking and wanting.

When you notice a signal or see that it's time by noticing his peepee dance, integrate self-awareness reflections: "You're doing __x__, which means you need to pee/poop" and then transport your child to the potty while saying "potty." Transporting at this point can mean shuffling along together or actually picking him up, teaching the movement *to* the potty as a clear sign that it's time to *go to the* potty.

You can also just say a word like "potty," "peepee," or "I need to peepee," or simply point to the bathroom, when it's time to go or when your child has begun to go and you're transporting her to the potty. This word, phrase, or gesture is essentially *what you want her to start saying to you* when she needs to pee. It will become BABY'S signal in the future.

Bottom line, prompting translates into signaling over time. This is just like feeding: saying the word "banana" translates into baby asking for a "banana" by name in the future. We are simply naming things for baby to make it easier to be self-aware and communicate needs.

Remember that you must continue prompting until the whole process is complete. Completion will occur between 14-20 months old depending on how you close up shop and how quickly that long-term brain memory develops.

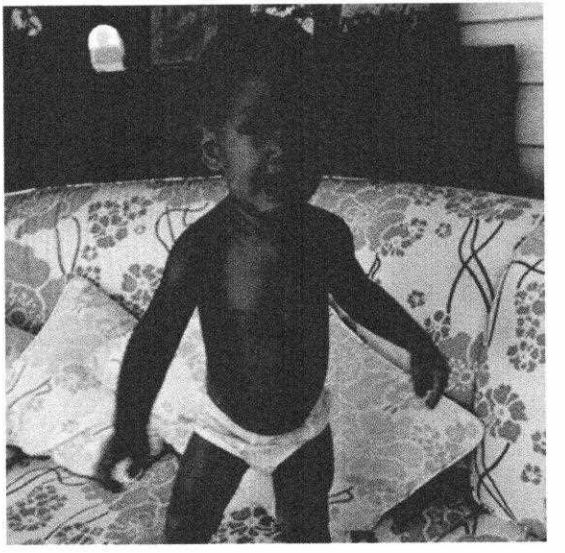
TROUBLESHOOTING

If you're *starting* EC with a mobile baby or toddler and things feel unmanageable (i.e., this whole thing stresses you out), use a cloth

diaper back-up during the day for 1-2 weeks to ease into the practice with a diaper back-up as we do with younger babies. Use the Easy Catches for a while to get into the swing of things, which are described in Part 1 Step 5.

If that doesn't do it for ya, and you and your baby aren't finding a rhythm, you'll want to do a "re-set," then start over again. More on that in a sec.

Most importantly, remember that the *often-scariest option* is usually a good way to prevent trouble: **after walking is mastered, stop using diapers**. Dress baby in underwear or commando. It is the most clear, confident sign you can give your child that things have changed... for good. (And it's what our grandparents did.)



Maintenance Tips for Mobile Babies and Beyond

After you've begun EC and have figured out the starting parts, whenever that was, you'll need to "maintain" the practice by keeping it up through mobility and beyond. You will keep ECing, part-time or full-time, as per everything in The Basics Part 1 and Part 2 sections and the rest of this book, and integrate the following mobile baby and young toddler tips:

1. Continue to do diaper-free time (i.e., time without the diaper as a back-up, for instance, with undies, or just pants, or naked [if he doesn't just pee wherever], or split crotch, whatever you wish) at least 30 min-2 hrs per day.

2. Work on using the words "wait" and "potty" or "pee in potty" every time he starts to go on the floor or in his pants, whether diapered or not. Or say "I need to pee, Mama/Papa" to replace the "pee in potty" phrase. This will teach him what to say *to you* when he needs to go.

3. Continue making it fun to learn how to sit and stay on the potty. Modeling by the parents and other older kids (or YouTube) is advised. Get the job done "so we can go out to the living room and do other, more interesting and fun things!" Matter. Of. Fact.

4. Notice her signals and either set her on the potty or prompt her to take herself, depending on what she seems capable of doing.

5. Whatever part he resists, try to figure out a way to create autonomy in that part of the process. Teach something!

6. Use Generic Timing and Natural Timing (the latter you learned in diaper-free time or could learn in more diaper-free time) to offer when you think she needs to go, or before an outing when YOU need her to try to go before you leave.

Like this: (Sitting her on the potty) "Okay, one last pee before we put your pants on and leave." (Non-emotionally – if your child resists, just ask "Do you want to go to the park?" *yes* "Okay, pee first and we can go.")

7. If at all, begin to use diapers as a back-up less and less. Use them as a tool. As you get the hang of things together, wean yourself off the trainers and into undies and pants, or pants only.

8. Encourage him to continue to tell you he needs to go. If he doesn't and pees his pants instead, you can tell him, "Tell Mama/Daddy next time, and I'll help you put your pee in the potty." Keep it brief.

Again, this is just like what you'd do when you start feeding solids. You want to give a vocabulary that both of you will use, including what to say when things don't go smoothly.

9. Eventually, teach her how to push down her pants. This is where just dressing her in loose elastic pants with no undies might help. This can happen when you see fit (we've done it after walking has been mastered, around 11-17 months). Start with "This is how you put your thumbs in your pants." Sit her down and pull her pants halfway off, encouraging her to push or pull them the rest of the way off. Or, have her "push" her pants down while standing.

10. If your child is reaching 18 months and things haven't wrapped up naturally yet, plus you (the parent) feel ready to be done with EC, order my other book on non-coercive potty training and wrap it up with a potty training experience, or take my Wrapping Up EC mini-course, or continue doing pure EC via these maintenance tips, trusting that things will wrap up if you stay consistent and give him all the tools he needs for self-mastery. Your choice. The point is, there are many ways to stop doing EC when you are ready to be done.

11. Continue communicating without over-talking. Enjoy connecting with your child more than being potty-centered. Trust your child and yourself.

The Re-set

If things get stressful, unsuccessful, or overwhelming with a mobile baby or young toddler, you may want to do a "re-set" and start over. Here's how:

Use a diaper FULL-TIME, day and night, for 2 weeks. Mark it on your calendar. You will ONLY potty him when he is REALLY insisting, signaling loudly (this may look slightly different than before, or the same), or needs to poop (if this has always been an easy catch for you guys).

Otherwise, change him when he's wet. Don't overtalk anything. Tell him at the beginning of each day, "You are going to wear a diaper all day today because you are still learning. If you need to pee or poop, tell me or [caregiver's name], and we will take it off for you so you can put your pee in the potty." Otherwise, nada.

Ignore misses for these 2 weeks! I know it will be hard, but please do so. During a re-set, you will not offer the potty at night either unless urgently requested by your baby and follow the above instructions as well. Enjoy your break!

DISCOVER MORE: Learn more about the re-set on podcast episode #46. See Appendix 3.

AFTER the 2-week re-set, I recommend you do the 1-2 days of naked teaching time as described in the Hybrid Plan available on the Book Owners Website. You will do so with a peripheral focus (not hyper-focused but focused on connection and play), including the whole transport-to-the-potty-every-time bit. Read about this in that download to understand what I mean.

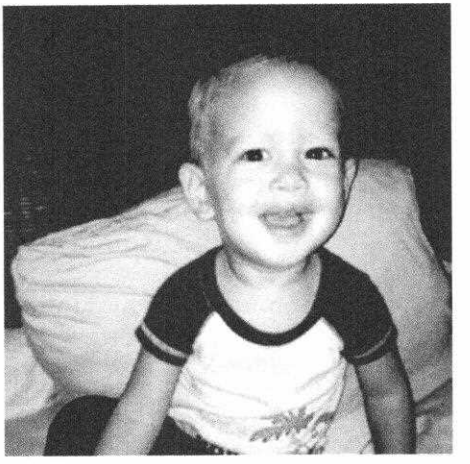
THEN, if your baby is walking and it's time to ditch the awake-time diapers, dress him consistently in underwear or pants-only every day. And do the maintenance mode I've described above. Continue to be peripheral about pottying. Remove it from the center of concerns. Remember that hyper-focus is the number one cause for potty pauses.

And that's it for the additional Mobile Baby and Young Toddler-specific instructions! This is a work in progress, so for any real-time updates to this method visit our Book Owners Website (see Appendix 2).

34 More Tips for Starting Older (All Ages Between 6-18 Months)

Before we in the GDF community really knew what we were doing when starting EC older (what used to be called "late-start EC"), I

gathered a bunch of tips from various resources across the Internet, our private support group, and real life. I kept them in this revision of the book because the list contains solid advice that might help one of you take it to the next level. This is a collection of everything out there so please read through it and use what you like, discard what doesn't resonate.



1. Learn EC by following the EC instructions in this book, no matter what age your baby is: The Basics Parts 1 and 2. Getting off to an informed start with an older baby is priceless.

2. Decide whether you want to do EC part-time, occasionally, or full-time. Do as much as you can without adding unnecessary stress to your lives. Remember that potty learning at any age is inconvenient so it doesn't come as a surprise. See the section called EC for Working Parents (& Other Part-timers) for more details on how to do EC part-time.

3. Switch to cloth diapers or modified disposables immediately (at least part-time) if you use disposables. See How to Diaper with EC for more info. You can eventually try switching to tiny trainers or undies if you wish. This change will provide you (& your baby) with information about when your baby is wet so you can change him immediately. It will also help you learn his patterns and signals.

4. Change diapers immediately upon wetness/soiling. Break the habit of letting your baby sit in wetness. Either change the diaper more frequently or use a cloth diaper, held in place sumo-style, which will help you know immediately when baby is wet. See How to Diaper with EC.

5. Do naked diaper-free time at times, and do it responsibly. This allows your older, diaper-dependent baby to learn cause and effect." *When I feel pressure, then I release, wet stuff comes out.* It informs baby about pee/poop (which has been hidden thus far) and speeds learning. WARNING! Please see: Doing Regular Diaper-free Time, Responsibly.

6. Go for the easy catches first. At first, rely more on Generic Timing (times when babies commonly have to go) and the 4 Easy Catches (Part 1 Step 5). This gets baby and you used to what a "catch" feels like, building confidence. Examples: during diaper change, upon waking, after taking out of carrier, poops, etc.

7. Mobile babies and carpet. Modify observation time by either doing it over a non-carpet surface, naked-bottomed, and watching closely; or observe while wearing your baby in a baby carrier; or use trainers or a sumo style backup if you have carpet.

8. Wear your baby more often. The closer you are to your baby, the more signals you will catch on to, as well as the natural timing of his pottying needs.

9. Write down your baby's Signals and Natural Timing during your observation periods, no matter how you adapt the observation step. Just don't go overboard! Having a visual record will help you get in tune. Use the Signal and Observation Logs, available on the Book Owners Website. Learning natural timing based on feeding and waking is generally easier (which these logs incorporate).

10. Signals may now equal the "peepee dance." As baby ages, his signals may equate more and more to your typical childlike "peepee dance," such as fidgeting, jumping around, grabbing the crotch or

squeezing the knees together, and getting increasingly hyper and irritable. This is a good thing to learn about your child.

11. Transport your baby to the potty if she pees during naked time. Model where the pee and poop go by (gently, calmly) airlifting your little darling to the potty if she should start peeing or pooping during naked observation time. Even if you just catch a drop, that is fine. It will teach her the motion of going to the potty herself. DO IT CALMLY. Alternatively, bring the potty to your child and have her sit.

12. Switch from cue noises to prompting with the words you'd like him to use to tell you he needs to go, such as "I need to pee" (or use sign language).

13. If you use verbal language and sign language before, during, and after pottying, be consistent & brief.

14. Experiment with the Position, Cue, Environment, & even Receptacle. Be open, flexible & creative.

15. Have an "open door" policy in your family's bathroom. Let your baby watch you potty and potty with you (I'm on mine, you're on yours). Model where the pee/poop goes, but don't make it a big deal.

16. Spend time around other children who use the potty, if possible – whether they have been EC'd or not. It is invaluable for older babies to see other babies (or young children) using the potty instead of a diaper. YouTube is a creative option, too.

17. Discover what helps your baby relax & focus on the potty. Sing potty songs, keep a bin of potty-only toys next to her potty, run water in the sink, turn your back, or possibly leave the room (because sometimes privacy helps babies relax and focus best).

18. Do not hover or hyper-focus on EC.

19. Get support. Visit our private support group. Send our community (and our coaches) your challenges and let the good advice flow.

20. Be patient and don't expect immediate results. Don't get frustrated if it takes a while to unlearn going in the diaper – it can take days, weeks, or months.

21. Don't compare yourself with others. Enjoy your baby's personal pace.

22. Be matter of fact about poop and pee. If you notice yourself showing disgust (or other negative emotions) around poop and messes associated with potty learning (an attitude learned through cleaning so many messy diapers), remind yourself that pooping is natural; everybody poops. Likewise, over-celebrating, ogling over how great he pooped, and even benign praising can be detrimental to his autonomous desires. Be matter of fact, gentle, and avoid being overbearing.

23. Avoid negative language, attitude, and stance. Remember, punishment, coercion, anger, and pressure are not part of EC. Reward systems, charts, and M&Ms are also not part of EC (they are forms of coercion, too). If a wise toddler picks up on any negative or pressuring vibes, it could very well sabotage the whole learning process and delay potty independence. Take a deep breath and seek support if you start losing it (we all do at some point). And remember: being direct, being firm, and teaching good boundaries are positive when your tone is neutral.

24. Success and order varies. You may have success with poop first, then pee much later; pee then poop; nighttime then daytime; day then night. Take it as it comes, in whichever order it happens.

25. Delayed signals are normal for older-starting babies. If he tells you every time after he poops or pees in his pants, don't worry, this is common for those starting older. He will eventually tell you before, and getting to that goal is not a linear process.

26. Potty pauses can happen for older starters (although they can happen to any baby). Your child is directly in the middle of so much learning and development, and with illness, teething, travel, and other life changes, potty learning can be pushed to the end of their list. It's also a time for pushing limits, and potty pauses can coincide with budding toddlerhood. Let him explore and trust him to learn. Model what's expected. Be patient. Read my section on Potty Pauses.

27. Use "reflective language" & enlist an older baby's help in clean-up. When your older baby has a miss in the home, state matter-of-factly, "Pee/poop goes in the potty." Then, enlist her help in cleaning it up and taking it to the bathroom. Be consistent with this. Do not punish; be gentle yet clear in your reflections of what should happen. Have your child help remove and replace wet clothes. Set up your bathroom to make this easy.

28. Talk about things openly with your child, when they happen (briefly, yet matter-of-factly: where it goes, how it just went in an undesirable space, where pee/poop belongs, how it feels, his feelings around it, etc.). He can understand more than you think. But do not over-talk; it shows fear and uncertainty and leaves no room for your child to think about and process what happened.

29. Trust your intuition as it develops. Notice thoughts, images, or sensations that lead you to a hunch that baby needs to go, and act on them. (And notice when you "knew it" but didn't act on the hunch.)

30. Trust your baby's growing desires as they develop. As she learns about herself, she may want more control over the pottying process. Trust her to experiment and learn in her own way. If she insists that she doesn't need to go, or that she can do it herself, listen and give that a chance to be. She will learn from trying to rely on herself.

31. Read books together about pottying with your older child. I have written 2 board books to assist in normalizing the potty routine through storytime.

32. If your child is afraid to sit on the toilet, try sitting him on it while he's still wearing his diaper. As he learns that it's okay and comfortable to sit on the potty, gradually remove the diaper from the equation.

33. If your baby is fine with sitting on the potty but won't go in it just yet, regularly have her sit on it during typically "productive" times, getting her comfortable with it with no pressure or agenda. Productive times can include after waking, during a diaper change, and/or about 15 minutes after mealtime. Limit your potty-sitting practice to 5-7 minutes each time.

34. Enlist the help of family and older children. Get everyone involved for a very connecting and rewarding family experience. Older children have extra-sensitive intuition around when a baby needs to potty. If family members are skeptical, let them see EC in action during a time you're usually successful, or have them potty your child during such a time.

Positions Gallery

This section contains a photo series of the main EC positions, a step-by-step photo series for setting up a soaker pad, and additional photos of babies in various positions.

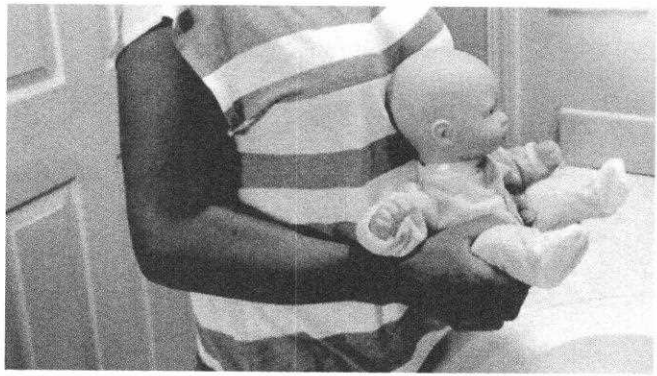
A Little Bit About EC Positions

There are many ways to position your baby for pottying. Some babies like some positions and resist others. Babies may also change preference from one position to another as time goes on.

Here are some keys for using the positions listed on the following pages.

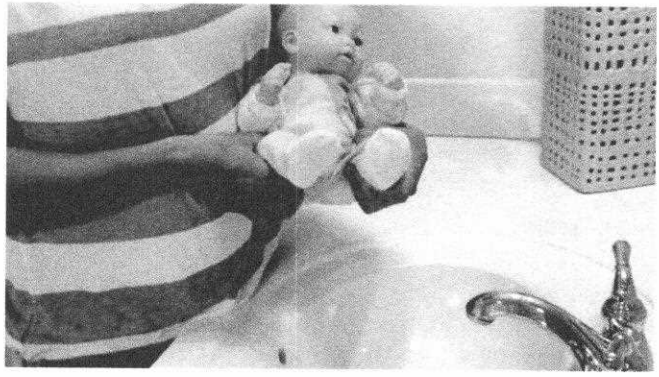
1. Choose a position that is:
    - comfortable
    - relaxing
    - safe
    - secure
    - supportive (spine, neck, and head)
    - warm (temperature of place, clothing on baby) and
    - hygienic.
2. Hold your baby gently with a peaceful, neutral attitude. (Breathe!)
3. Be open and experiment until you find a position that meets both of your needs.
4. Use wise, loving, intelligent care while handling your infant.

Indoor Pottying Positions



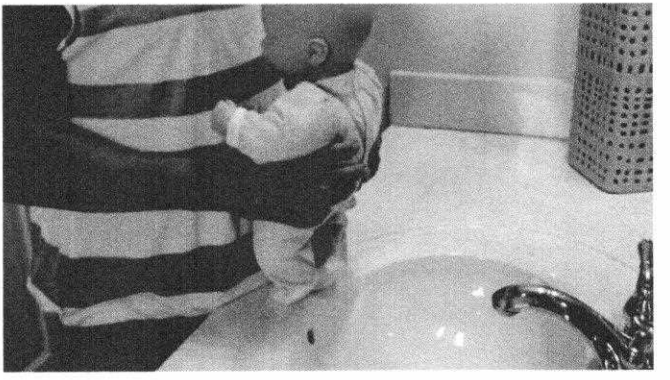
Classic EC Position Over Sink

Hold baby gently under the thighs, resting baby's back, neck, and head on your torso. Also known as a "deep squat," "typical EC hold," and "classic EC hold." This photo shows the position over the sink. (Why the sink? Well, it is totally optional, but often parents potty exclusively breastfed babies over the sink because it is easy to clean, it is easy on the back, you can smile at each other in the mirror, and you can run the water to cue baby, relax baby, or warm up the water for rinsing their bottom – and the sink – after.)



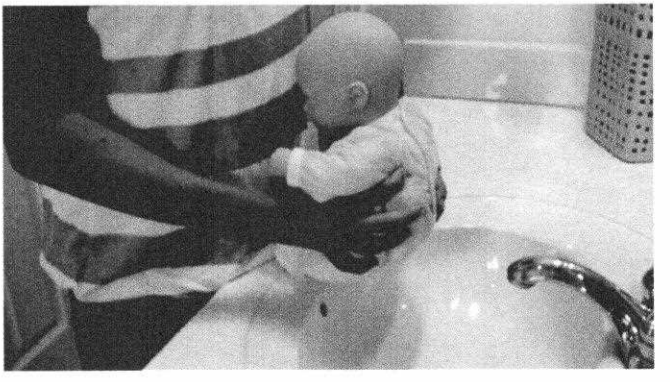
Cradled Classic EC Position Over Sink

For babies who resist or cry in the classic EC position (some don't feel comfortable, safe, or relaxed in it), simply hold the baby by the thighs and rest baby's back, neck, and head in the crook of your bent arm/elbow. Aim the rear end over the sink. This position is great for newborns!



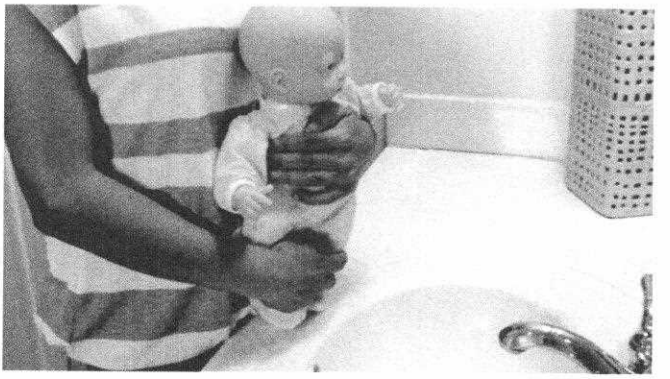
BOTTOM-BACK POSITION OVER SINK PART 1

Hold baby under armpits with your hands around ribcage. Place baby's feet on the edge of the sink/counter. If baby is very young, you can scoop your fingers up behind her head to hold it up for her, while still holding her under the armpits with your thumbs. Another nice position for newborns who dislike the classic.



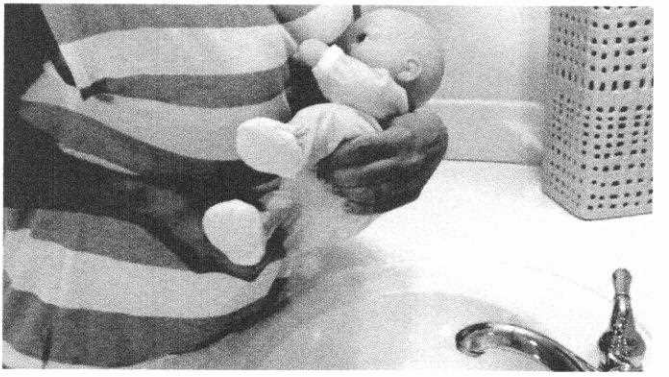
BOTTOM-BACK POSITION OVER SINK PART 2

After positioning baby's feet on the edge of the sink/counter, shift baby's bottom back over the sink to complete the position.



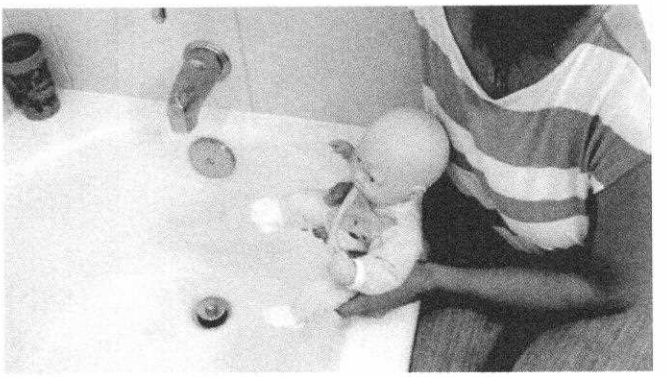
In-Arms Standing Position Over Sink (For Boys)

If your boy dislikes the other holds, the standing, supported hold may be your answer. Hold baby snugly with one hand across his chest/belly and the other hand across his shins (between the knee and feet). Balance his feet on the edge of the sink or counter. His body should be pressed up against your torso. If you need to aim, use the pinky finger of your lower hand to reach up and aim the penis into the sink.



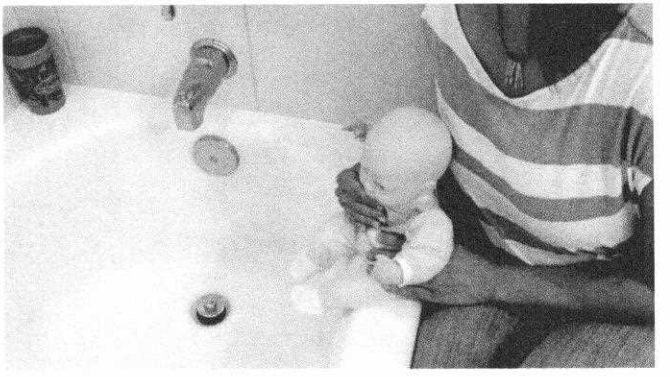
Breastfeeding Over Sink

Especially good for late-night pottying with an infant who has trouble relaxing, but definitely needs to go, the Breastfeeding Over Sink position is kind of an acrobatic act. Basically, you'll do the Cradled Classic EC Position with one additional detail: the baby remains latched to your breast. Don't forget to aim!



Classic EC Position Into Bathtub

This is a good position for a boy or girl who pees straight out - allowing the wall of your bathtub to "catch" the pee! Simply do the Classic EC Position while carefully holding your baby over the bathtub. Be sure baby's neck and head are still supported or baby may not like this position.



Bathtub Towel Position

Imagine this photo with a bath towel (not pictured) laid over the edge of the bathtub, underneath the baby. Then, sit the baby on the towel, holding him around the waist, and cue. The pee will spray onto the wall, into the tub, or will soak into the towel, and the towel will keep everyone from slipping around.

Classic EC Position Squatting in Tub

This is the Classic EC Position while standing and squatting inside the tub. For smaller parents and out of some unique necessity (such as a boy who pees straight out), you may try pottying directly in the tub. Be sure baby's head and neck are supported by your torso and hold underneath the thighs.

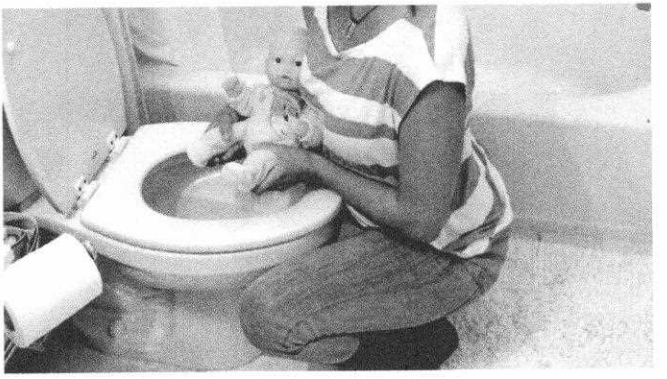
Classic EC Position Squatting in Shower

If you have a stand-up stall shower, this position is great. Some babies like to be close to the ground when they potty. Put the baby into the classic EC position by gently holding the thighs and resting her back, neck, and head against your torso. Squat straight down and use your thighs to "lock in" your baby, which makes her feel secure. This position is commonly used outdoors.

Classic EC Position Squatting Over Toilet

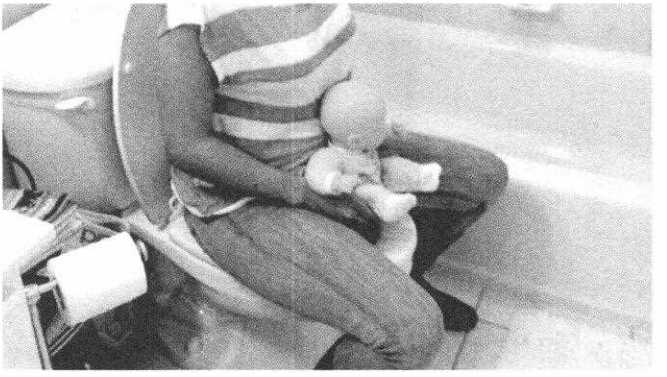
Facing the toilet put baby into the classic EC position. Lower into a squat while facing the toilet, tightening your knees and thighs tight around the bowl for stability. Hold your baby over the toilet while resting his body on your chest. Do not hold your baby away from your body in this position. It's not safe and most babies don't like it, as it causes them to feel insecure, as if they are dangling and might fall through the air.

TIP: Put a small stool underneath your own bottom to make this position easier on your back!



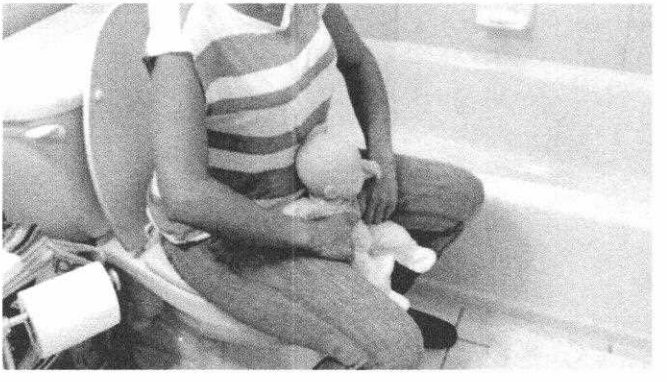
Cradled Classic EC Position Squatting Over Toilet

If your baby resists the classic EC position, try the more relaxed cradled version. Put baby into Cradled Classic position facing the toilet; squat and tighten your knees and thighs around the bowl for stability. Don't hold your baby away from your body. Another good one for the newborns. Again, consider doing this while you sit on a low stool.



Classic EC Position While Sitting Back on Toilet

Hold your baby by the thighs with baby's back, neck, and head resting against your body (classic EC position) as you sit far back on the open toilet, leaving a little open space for baby to pee into the toilet.



Sitting Back on Toilet, Holding a Sitting Baby

If your baby can hold her head up pretty well and is close to (or already) sitting, sit far back on the open toilet, leaving a little open space for baby to pee into the toilet. Let your baby sit on the toilet seat and hold her either by the arms or midsection, whichever is most comfortable and secure.

Hold Baby On Toilet Seat Facing You

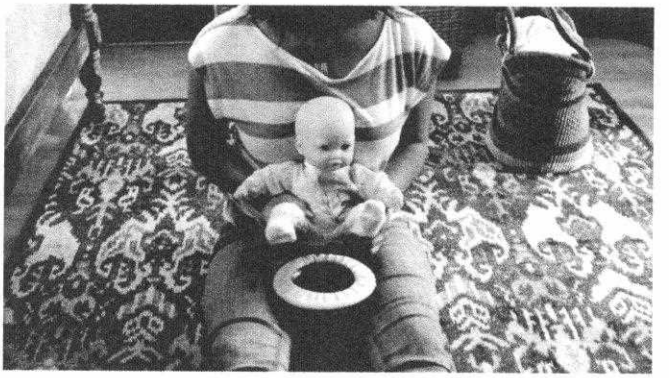
When your baby can hold his head up on his own, especially when he's able to sit on his own, this position can be helpful. You can hold your baby around the midsection or by the hands or arms.

Hold Baby On Toilet, Facing You with Toilet Seat Reducer

This is the same as above but with the addition of a toilet seat reducer. In general, for girls and boys, toilet seat reducers help a baby feel more comfortable on the big toilet. To contain boy pee, use a toilet seat reducer with a good, tall splashguard, or lean your boy slightly back so his stream has more room.

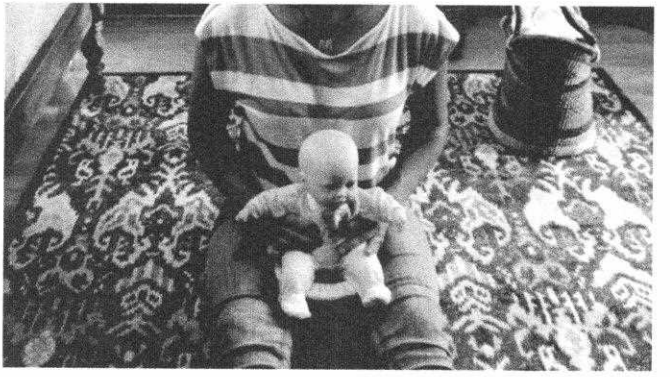
When your baby can sit very well independently, you can (obviously) let go and allow her to sit without holding her. (Sitting a baby on the toilet seat reducer can often help if she has begun escaping the mini potty.) If an older baby tries to dive off the toilet into the parent's arms, parents will usually pad the floor with towels or something soft and back off, busying themselves with something to give the baby "privacy."

Parents have found that if they are within arm's reach, the baby will typically dive into their arms, so backing away helps them get past this impulse. If you're going to try this, please do it carefully and at your own risk.



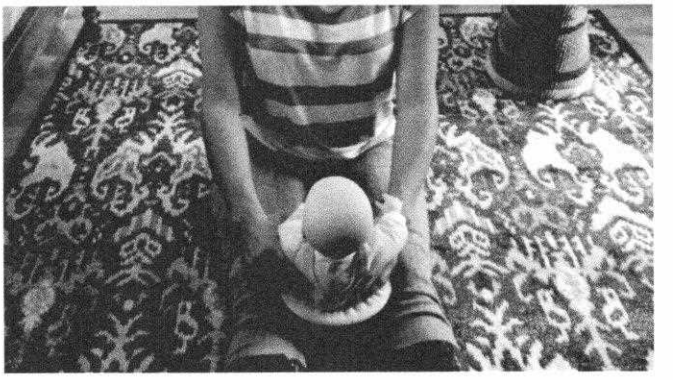
Classic EC Position Over Top Hat Potty

Place the top hat potty between your legs, squeezing slightly to hold it in place. You can do this while sitting on a chair, in the car, or while sitting on the floor with your legs straight out. Hold your baby by the thighs, resting his back, neck, and head against your chest in classic EC position over the top hat potty.



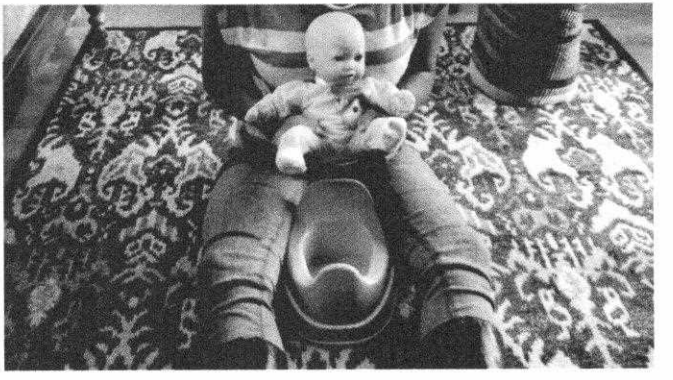
Hold Baby On Top Hat Potty, Facing Away

This is a great position for use in a parked car, sitting on the floor with your legs straight out, or sitting on a chair. Place the top hat potty between your legs, squeezing it slightly to hold it in place. Leaning the baby's back, neck, and head against your torso, sit the baby on the top hat potty facing away from you, holding baby around the midsection.



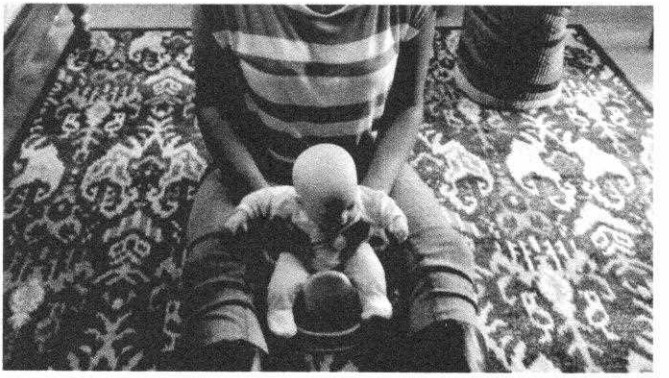
Hold Baby On Top Hat Potty, Facing Toward You

This is yet another nice position for use in a parked car, sitting on a chair, or sitting on the floor with your legs straight out. Place the top hat potty between your legs, squeezing it slightly to hold it in place. Hold the baby around the midsection to help her sit on the top hat potty while facing toward you.



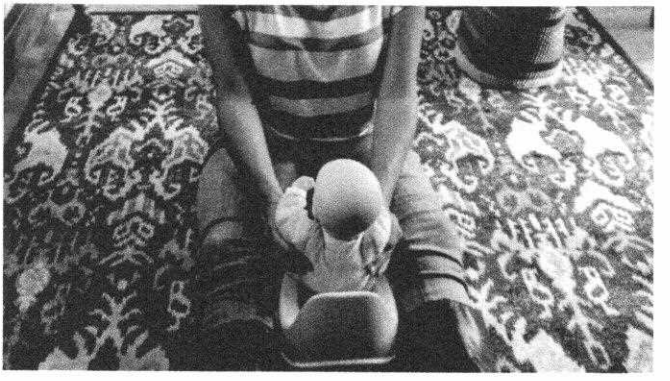
Classic EC Position Over Mini Potty On Ground

Set the mini potty on the floor. Hold baby under thighs and rest his back, neck, and head against your torso (classic EC position). Whether kneeling or sitting, hold baby over the mini potty and aim carefully.



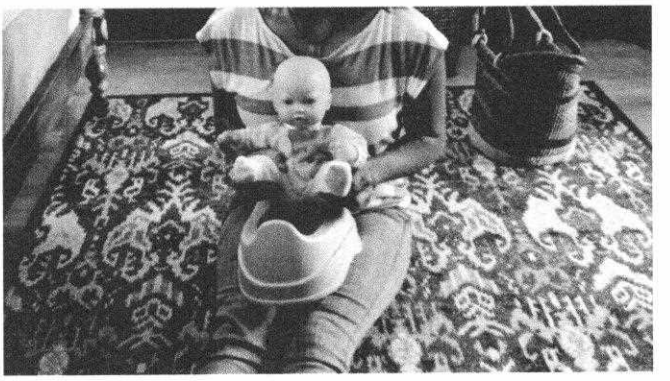
Hold Baby On Mini Potty On Ground, Facing Away

Sit on the ground with your legs straight out in front of you. Set the mini potty between your legs, facing away from you. Hold your baby with your hands around her midsection, helping her sit on the potty with your assistance, facing away from you.



Hold Baby On Mini Potty On Ground, Facing You

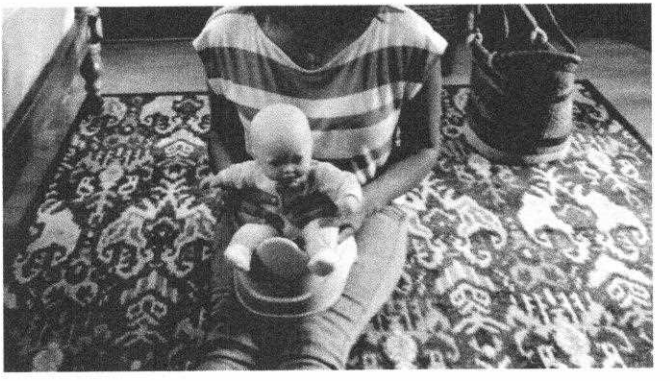
Set the mini potty on the ground, facing toward you. Sit down with legs crossed in front of the potty. Hold your baby with your hands around her midsection, helping her sit on the potty with your assistance, facing you.



Classic EC Position Over Mini Potty On Lap

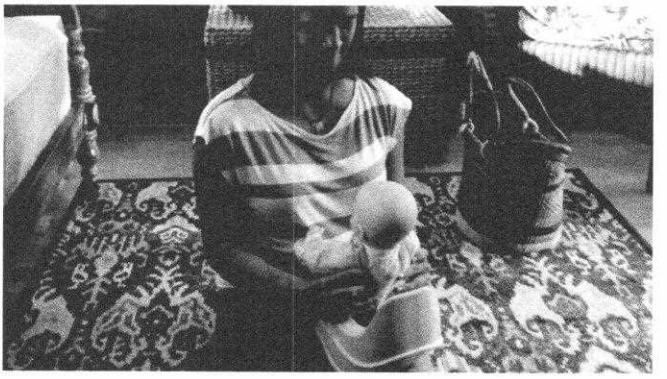
Set the mini potty on your lap. Hold baby under thighs and rest his back, neck, and head against your torso (classic EC position). Whether sitting on the ground or on a chair, hold baby over the mini potty and aim carefully.

DISCOVER MORE: This and the next one are good positions for transitioning from in-arms to using the mini potty. Listen to podcast episode #39 for more on how to do this. See Appendix 3.



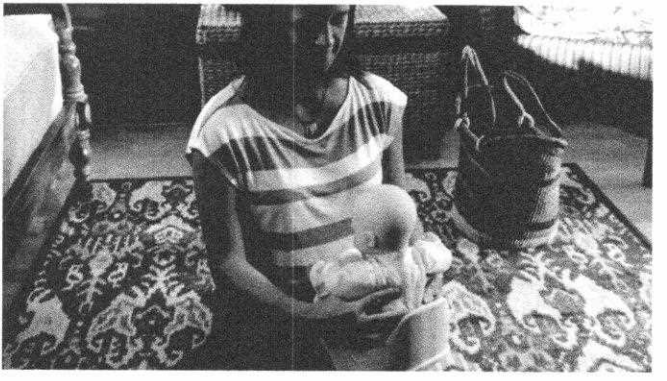
Hold Baby On Mini Potty On Lap, Facing Away

Sit on the ground with your legs straight out in front of you. Set the mini potty on your lap, facing away from you. Hold your baby with your hands around her midsection, helping her sit on the potty with your assistance, facing away from you.



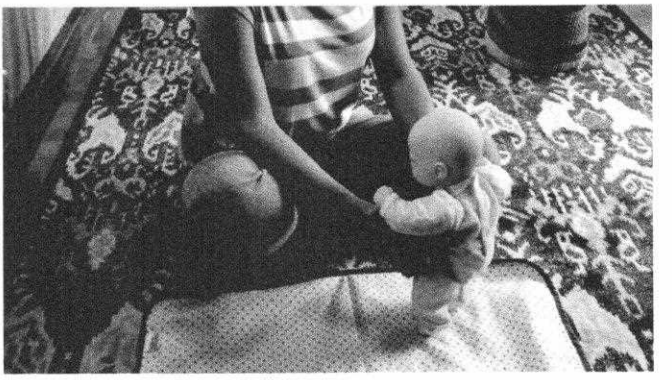
Hold Baby On Mini Potty On Lap, Facing You

Set the mini potty on your lap, facing toward you. Hold your baby with your hands around her midsection, helping her sit on the potty with your assistance, facing you.



Hold Baby On Mini Potty On Lap, Facing You, for Aiming

For a boy who pees straight out, you'll do the same as the last position but sit your boy further back on the potty, which would cause him to slightly lean forward, thus aiming the stream to be better contained by the potty's splashguard up front.



BOTTOM-BACK POSITION OVER PAD, PART 1 OF 2

Lay a waterproof or layered puddle pad on any surface. Hold the baby by the midsection under her armpits (supporting her head with your fingers if needed, while leaving your thumbs under her armpits). Plant her feet on the pad, then...

BOTTOM-BACK POSITION OVER PAD, PART 2 OF 2

...shift the weight of baby's bottom back, away from you, aiming it over the pad. I pottied my first baby in this position for the first 6 weeks (until he had some semblance of neck control and could be sat on his mini potty) because he disliked the classic EC position. I folded over and reused dry areas of the pad for each potty, sometimes catching up to 6 pees on one mat before needing to wash.

Outdoor Pottying Positions

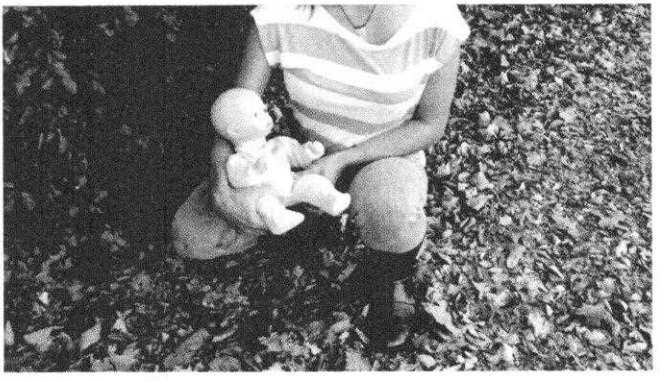
Classic EC Position While Squatting, In Nature

Everyone loves this position! Put your baby into the classic EC position by gently holding his thighs and resting his back, neck, and head against your torso. Squat straight down and use your thighs to "lock in" your baby, which makes him feel secure.

If your more mobile baby tries to crawl or walk off from this exploration-enticing position, try singing a song or saying something to distract him before and during use of this position.

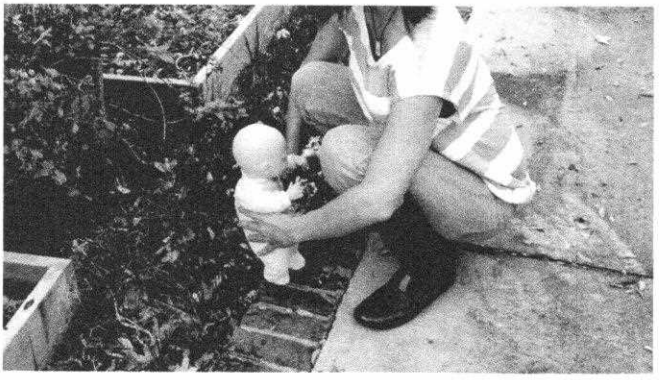
CRADLED CLASSIC EC POSITION, IN NATURE, PART 1 OF 2

This picture shows the shape your supporting arm takes to make the cradled classic EC position work.



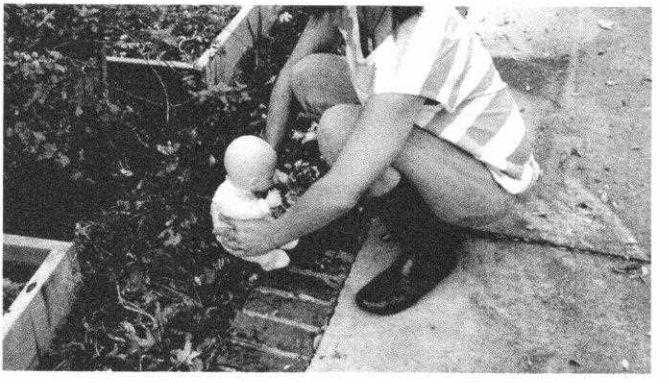
CRADLED CLASSIC EC POSITION, IN NATURE, PART 2 OF 2

Hold your baby under the thighs and lay her body onto your arm, allowing her head and neck to be cradled by the crook of your arm/elbow, as shown in Part 1 (above).



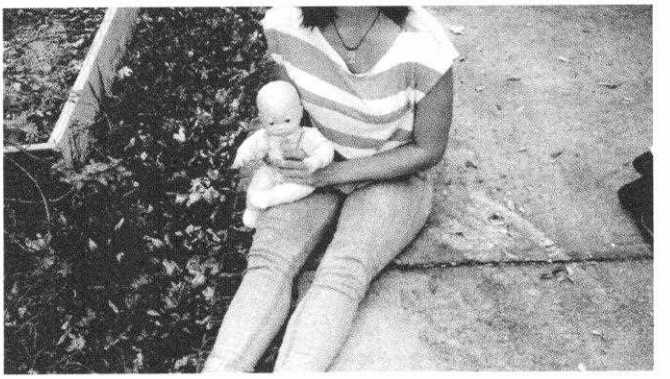
BOTTOM-BACK POSITION, IN NATURE/CITY, PART 1 OF 2

Find a curb, stone, or other firm surface to balance your baby's feet on while you pee him. Hold the baby by the midsection under his armpits (supporting his head with your fingers if needed, while leaving your thumbs under his armpits). Balance his feet on the firm surface, then...



BOTTOM-BACK POSITION, IN NATURE/CITY, PART 2 OF 2

...shift the weight of baby's bottom back, away from you, aiming it over the ground or concrete. This is a great position to potty a newborn or smaller baby who dislikes the classic EC position.

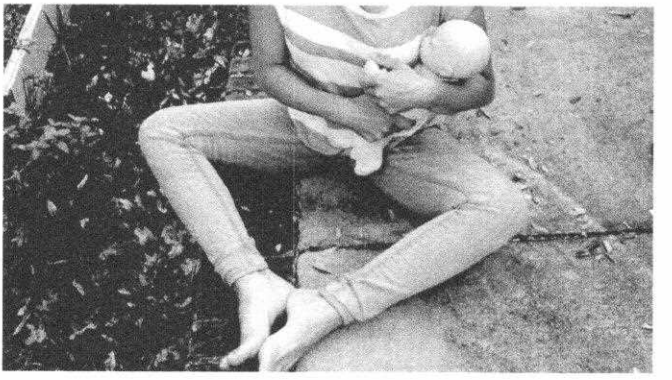


The Straight Leg Potty, In Nature, Part 1 of 2

In indigenous communities, caretakers use this position over the earth to potty younger babies who prefer to go in this relaxed position. To prepare the "straight leg potty," simply sit down and put your legs straight out with your heels touching each other.

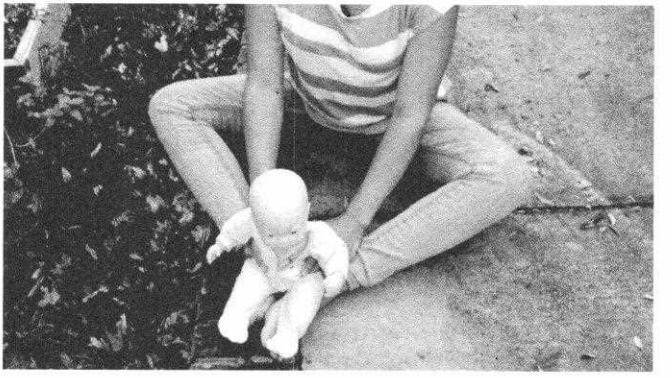
The Straight Leg Potty, In Nature, Part 2 of 2

After you've prepared your straight leg potty, simply lay your baby gently on her back on top of your lower legs, holding her in place with your hands on her upper body, arms, or hands. Your baby should be positioned so her bottom is over your lower calves/ankles (where a small hole is naturally created when your heels are touching). Her head should be approximately below your knees, her feet at or above your feet.



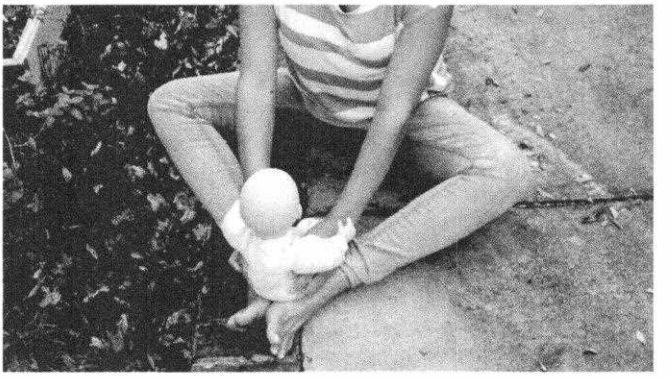
The Foot Potty, In Nature, Part 1 - Making the Hole

To create a "foot potty," as done in indigenous communities around the world, sit with your legs out flat and then slightly bend at the knees, letting your knees fall outward. Put your heels and the balls of your feet together, forming a diamond-shaped hole in the middle. You may need to arch your feet to get a decent-sized hole. Then,



The Foot Potty, In Nature, Part 2 - Facing Away

...place your baby's bottom directly over the hole you've made, holding her around her midsection, facing away from you. This position is good for a baby with some neck control, but if your baby isn't quite there yet, try facing her toward you, as shown in the next position.



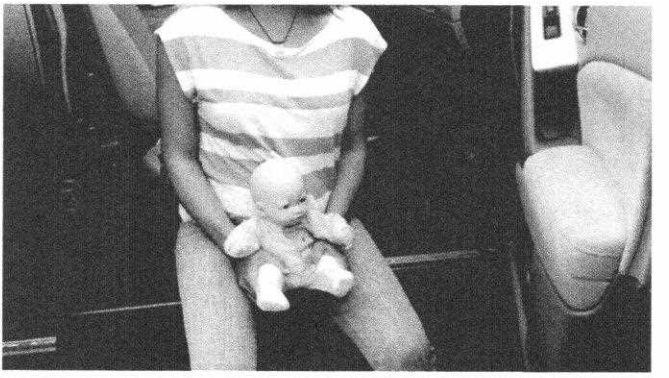
The Foot Potty, In Nature, Part 3 - Facing You

As mentioned in the last position, if your baby lacks full neck control, you can face him toward you, scooping your thumbs under his armpits, and using your fingers to balance his head. At any age, set baby on your foot potty with his bottom aimed over the diamond-shaped hole you've made.

Classic EC Position While Squatting, In The City

Put your baby into the classic EC position. Squat straight down and use your thighs to "lock in" your baby, which makes her feel secure. In the cityscape, try to be discreet and only potty your baby where you would potty your dog. Your squat will shield you from most people's views, but when in doubt of offending someone (which does happen!), find a public restroom.

Car Pottying Positions



Car Pottying: Classic EC Position Out the Door

Stop the car in a safe place and get your baby out of his car seat. Still sitting inside the car, carefully hold your baby in the classic EC position, aiming his rear end out the door. Obviously, use caution. This is the way many rural farmers across the world have been known to potty their babies, except they do it out of a moving tractor or other vehicle!

Car Pottying: Classic EC Position Squatting Between Car Doors (4-door)

Stop the car in a safe place. For a 4-door car, open both doors on the curb-side of your parked car. The two doors will shield you from wind and onlookers. Put baby into classic EC position and squat straight down between the doors, "locking" your baby into a secure position between your thighs.

Car Pottying: Classic EC Position Squatting Between Car Doors (2-door)

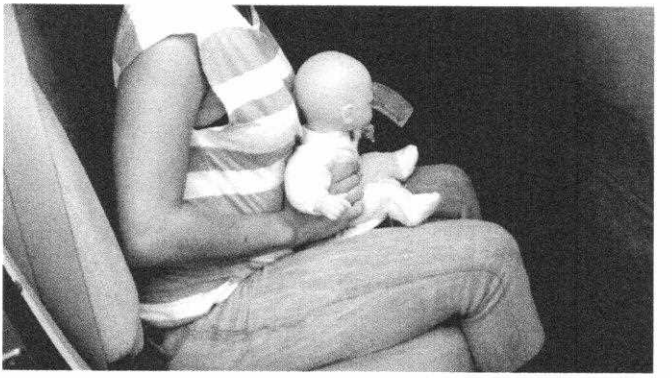
If you have a 2-door car, open the door on the curb-side of your parked car. Put baby into classic EC position and squat straight down behind the open door, "locking" her in securely between your thighs.

Using the Top Hat Potty Inside Parked Car - *see the following*

This is a top hat potty, aka potty bowl, that can be kept in the car at all times or tossed into your diaper bag for on-the-go pottying. Any time you are somewhere you can sit, this is the best tool for the job (if your baby is small). You hold it in place between your legs. The white thing on top is a potty cozy which keeps baby's bottom off the cold plastic of the potty. The top hat potties I offer at my other shop, TinyUndies.com, also come with an extra-wide rubber band on the neck to make the potty slip-proof and prevent spills on your lap (ask me how I know).

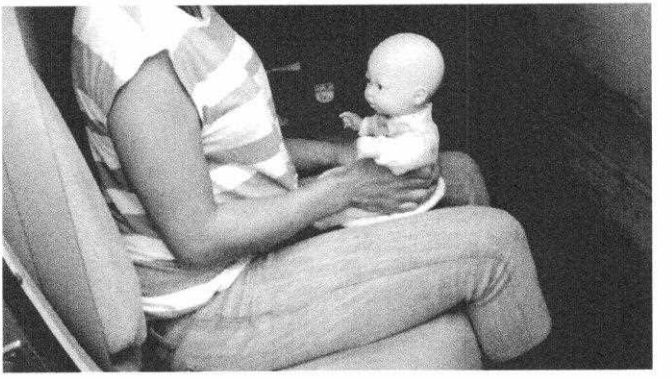
Classic EC Position Over Top Hat Potty, Inside Car

Place the top hat potty between your legs, squeezing slightly to hold it in place. Hold your baby by the thighs, resting his back, neck, and head against your chest in classic EC position over the top hat potty.



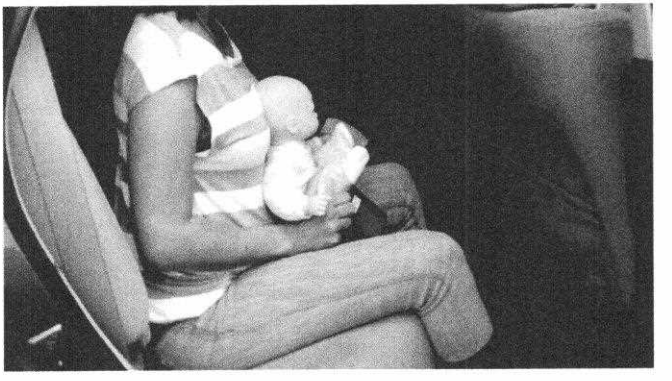
Hold Baby On Top Hat Potty, Facing Away, Inside Car

This is a great position for use in a parked car. Place the top hat potty between your legs, squeezing it slightly to hold it in place. Leaning the baby's back, neck, and head against your torso, sit the baby on the top hat potty facing away from you, holding baby around the midsection.



Hold Baby On Top Hat Potty, Facing Toward You, Inside Car

This is yet another nice position for use in a parked car. Place the top hat potty between your legs, squeezing it slightly to hold it in place. Hold the baby around the midsection to help her sit on the top hat potty while facing toward you.

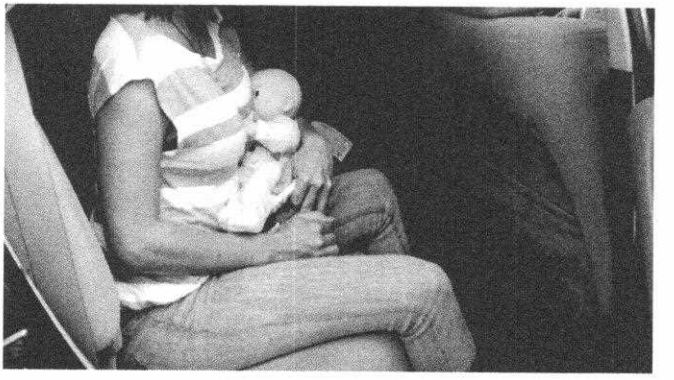


Hold Baby On Top Hat Potty, Tilted for Boy, Inside Car

This is a great position for pottying a boy who pees straight out, in a parked car. Place the top hat potty between your legs, squeezing it slightly to hold it in place. Leaning the baby's back, neck, and head against your torso, sit the baby on the top hat potty facing away from you, holding baby around the midsection. Tilt the top hat potty toward you as shown in the picture, ensuring your aim is on target!

Cradled Classic EC Position on Top Hat Potty, Inside Car

For babies who resist or cry while in the classic EC position (some don't feel comfortable, safe, or relaxed in it), simply hold the baby by the thighs and rest baby's back, neck, and head in the crook of your bent arm/elbow. Aim the rear end over the top hat potty, which is held securely between your thighs. And aim a boy baby's penis by pressing it downward with one of your free fingers.

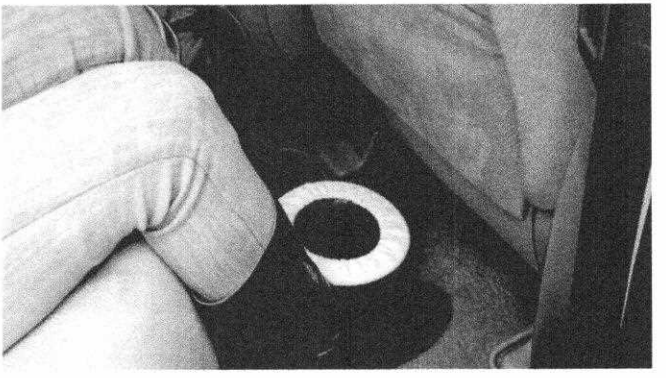


Nursing Over Top Hat Potty Inside Car

Place the top hat potty between your legs prior to nursing (if you know your baby's Natural Timing is to pee or poop during nursing, or if you know your baby needs to be relaxed into pottying by nursing). Get your baby into nursing position and rest his or her bottom over the top hat potty opening. If a boy, you may need to tilt the potty a little so the stream goes in. If a girl, try to get her bottom nice and centered. You can also use this position while bottle-feeding.

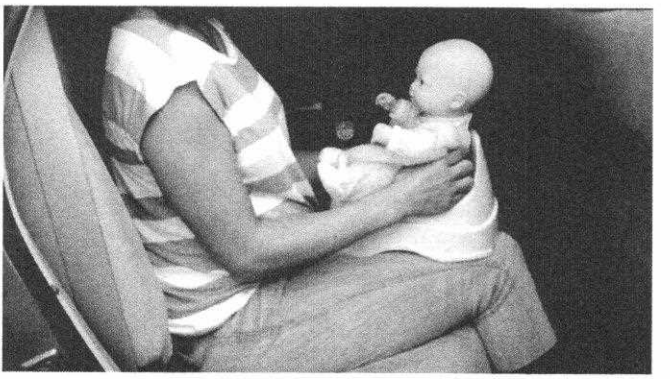
Dumping the Top Hat Potty

If your baby just peed in the top hat potty while you're in a parked car, simply pull the lip of the potty cozy down (if you've got one on it) and dump it via the uncovered side, as in the picture. If there's poop in it, save it until you get to a toilet (some people cover the top with a wet wipe to block the smell). Or, some people place a medium-sized yogurt container inside and pop the lid on the container once it has been filled, dumping it later or throwing the whole thing away right then or later.



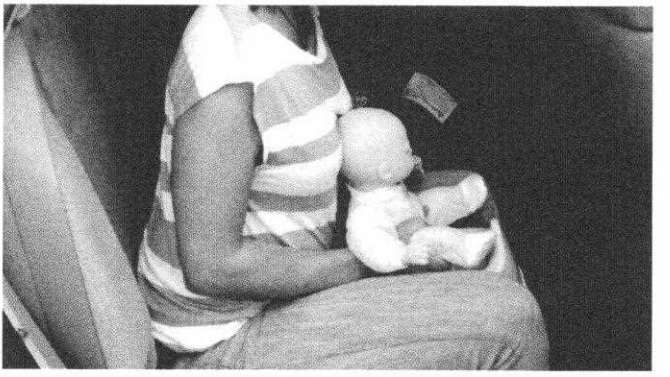
Balancing a Full Top Hat Potty in the Car

I've made the mistake...once...of not securing the used top hat potty on the drive home. If you're not driving, simply hold the top hat in place between your feet as shown in this picture until you get to a place you can dump it. If you are driving, be mindful of putting it somewhere where it won't dump out on the way home.



Hold Baby On Mini Potty On Lap, Facing You, Inside Car

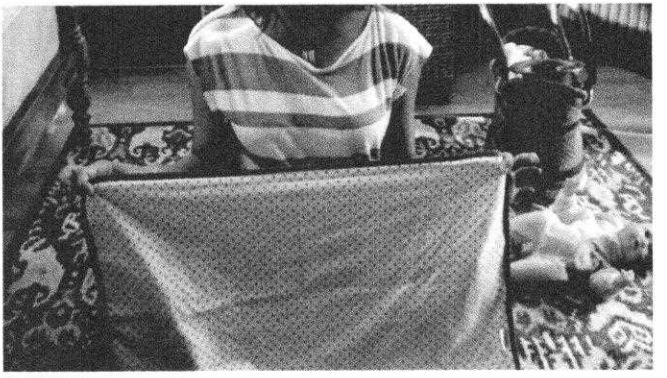
Sit on any open seat in your parked car. Set the mini potty on your thighs, facing toward you. Hold your baby with your hands around his midsection, helping him sit with your assistance on the potty. Dump pee outside; save poop for a toilet. Some people place a shallow yogurt container inside and pop the lid on the container once it has been filled. I've been known to turn a to-go coffee cup upside down and put it on top of the poop in the potty until I find a toilet. I've also enclosed the entire mini potty in a plastic grocery bag and tied it tight for the ride home.



Classic EC Position Over Mini Potty, Inside Car

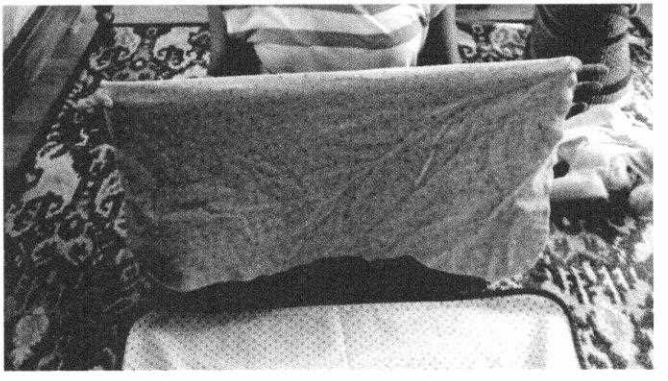
Set the mini potty on your lap or between your thighs. Hold baby under thighs and rest his back, neck, and head against your torso (classic EC position). Hold baby over the mini potty and aim carefully. Or, simply set baby on mini potty facing away from you while sitting in the parked car.

Setting Up a Soaker Pad on Any Surface



Part 1 of 4

For diaper-free observation time with a pre-mobile baby, or for pottying while breastfeeding, you can set up this easy soaker pad on any surface, including on your body as you lay down with baby laying on you. First, place a waterproof pad (shown), wool puddle pad, piece of 100% wool felt, or towel on the surface you're using.



Part 2 of 4

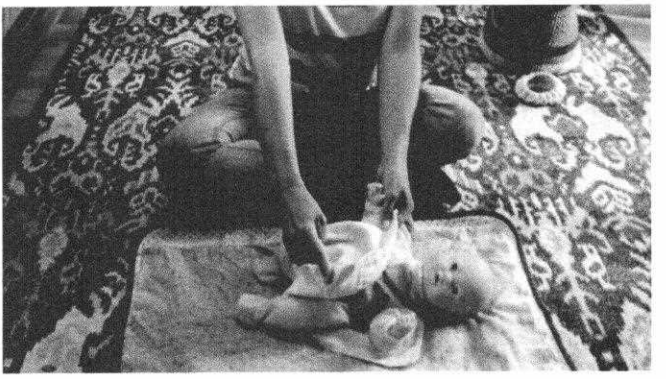
Next, place a receiving blanket, cotton blanket, sheet, towel, or other cloth on top of the bottom layer. If you're using a wool puddle pad or felted wool material, liquid will bead up on top of the pad and fall off...so, another layer above this is essential. If you're using a waterproof pad with a top cloth layer, you may skip this step.

PART 3 OF 4

Place a prefold cloth diaper or burp cloth on top of the blanket or cloth.

PART 4 OF 4

For diaper-free observation, lay the baby on top of the prefold cloth diaper with her bottoms off, but dressed warmly otherwise so she is comfortable. Adjust the temperature of the room if necessary. You can also dress her in baby chaps or use baby legwarmers to keep her legs warm. See the Supply List for where to get these items.



Modification for Observing Boys

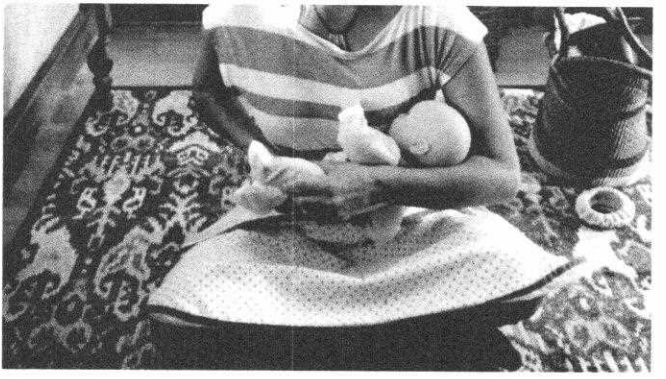
For a boy who pees upward or straight out, drape another prefold over his penis. Alternatively, you can place a prefold loosely between his legs and pay attention to when it becomes wet or soiled. However, this may keep you from knowing exactly when he pees or poops, and may prevent you from easily spotting his pre-potty signals. Another solution is to dress baby in Tiny Trainers – the solid colors become noticeably wet right away. See Appendix 1 for the Supply List.

Breastfeeding Pottying Positions

Nursing Position over Soaker Pad or Top Hat Potty

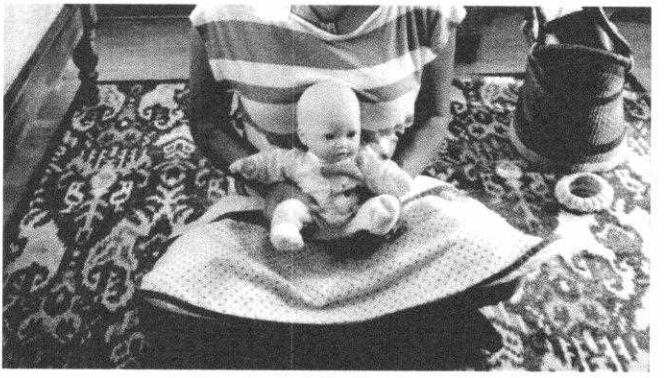
Assume the feeding position, leaving your baby's bottom uncovered but keeping her warm with long socks, legwarmers, or baby chaps. You will keep her over the pad or aimed over the top hat potty while feeding. With a boy, you can drape a prefold over his penis to keep dry.

Note: "breastfeeding" and "nursing" includes bottle-feeding in my book! If baby goes during either type of feeding, use these positions and setups.



Cradled Classic EC Position Over Soaker Pad

When baby pops off your breast, becomes still, bears down, or toots (whatever her signal is), you can either leave her in feeding position & cue (last photo) or use this position. Simply keep the arm that baby is resting on to breastfeed where it is and slide that hand under her outer thigh, moving your other hand to support her inner thigh. You'll shift to gently holding both thighs and keep the baby cradled by your breast as your cue. If a boy, press the penis down with a free finger.

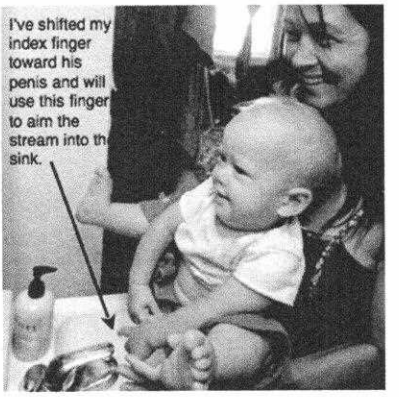


Classic EC Position Over Soaker Pad

Alternatively, you can transfer baby from feeding position to the classic EC position once he signals during feeding (by popping off, stopping, bearing down, or tooting). Hold baby by the thighs, with his body

resting on yours, over the pad. Switch out the pad, top layer, or wet or soiled prefold cloth diaper once he's finished. Learn more about how to potty while breastfeeding/bottle-feeding in the Unique Situations section.

Aiming the Boy Pottying Positions



Aiming the Boy*: Classic EC Position

Put your baby into classic EC position by holding him under his thighs and resting his back, neck, and head on your torso. Slide one of your hands toward his bottom and use your index finger to gently aim his penis toward its destination by pushing it downward. Some boys will stop peeing if you touch the penis to aim it *after* he's begun peeing, and some will not mind. Also, some boys will *begin* peeing when their penis is touched to aim it. Since I have three boys, I can say from experience that pressing it down to aim it after I get them into position and *before* they start peeing has worked great for us.

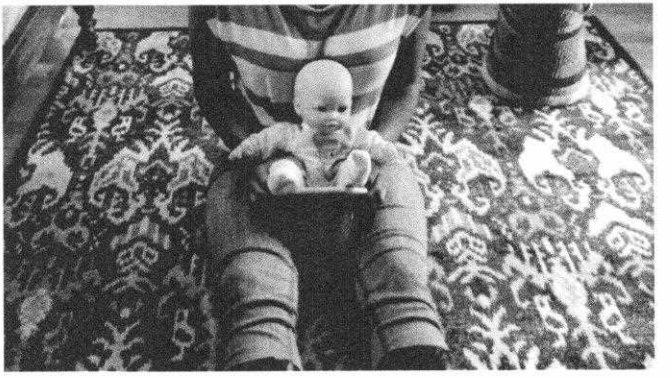
*NOTE: When my 2 girls were newborns they peed straight out just like my boys, so if you have this issue with a female baby, potty her in a place where it won't matter if the backsplash or wall gets peed on, tilt the potty as shown in the following pages, or possibly shield the spray with the palm of your hand if you really need the pee to go straight down. This phase will pass rather quickly, but just know that girl babies can also pee straight out in the first weeks of life.

Aiming the Boy: Letting Him Practice His Aim

Baby boys naturally handle their own penises...regularly. Part of this is instinctually related to stretching the foreskin (whether intact or not); part of this is learning how to aim his pee stream. Allow this so he may learn how to aim it. If pee is going everywhere, do this over the bathtub, outside, or place a mat underneath. And note that one reason baby boys get a mini erection (what we call a "peenie weenie") may be to make it ergonomically easier to grab and aim it in the future.

Aiming the Boy: On the Mini Potty or Toilet Seat Reducer

If the splash guard on your mini potty or toilet seat reducer just isn't tall enough to do its job, here's the fix. Scoot your boy a little further back on the seat. Lean his body gently toward you (toward the front of the seat). This should provide enough angle to get the pee inside.



Aiming the Boy: On the Top Hat Potty

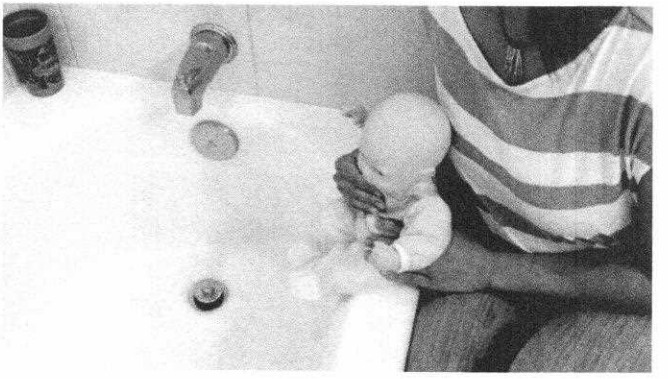
Place the top hat potty between your legs. While holding your baby in a seated position, facing away from you, directly on the top hat potty, let go of his thighs and hold the rim of the potty directly. Then, tilt the potty so the opening comes toward you, providing an angle that will help get the pee into the potty. The potty will no longer be held between your legs but instead will come off them just a bit. Use one of your spare fingers to reach in and press the penis downward.

Aiming the Boy: In the Shower

As mentioned earlier in this photo collection, you can potty your baby in the shower in classic EC position. With a boy, I would just turn around and face the wall so the pee stream would be contained!

Aiming the Boy: Outside

As mentioned earlier in this photo series, you can potty your baby outside in classic EC position while squatting. Simply aim your boy in the direction you'd like him to pee!



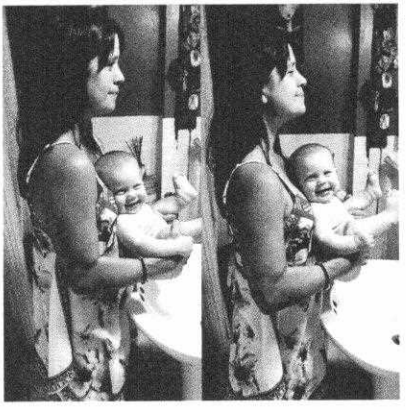
Aiming the Boy: At the Bathtub

Place a towel on the edge of the bathtub - this will absorb some of the pee if it trickles down and creates a non-slip surface. Set the baby in a seated position on the towel, facing the tub, with his body supported by your hands and/or body. Cue him. Some of the stream may soak the towel while some may go into the tub or onto the wall.

Aiming the Boy: Into a Mason Jar

Holding your baby on your lap, cradled in your arms, or in any comfortable position, hold a small Mason jar, plastic water bottle, or any appropriately sized vessel near his penis and cue. Do this with a prefold or towel in your lap in case the spray doesn't make it into its destination.

Posture While Pottying



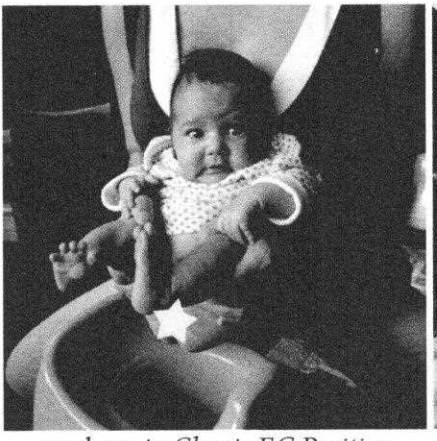
Minding Your Own Posture While Pottying Your Baby

As your baby grows (and sometimes takes longer to go potty), your posture may not be that great while pottying at the sink (like I do). The picture on the left shows my relaxed slouched position and the pic on

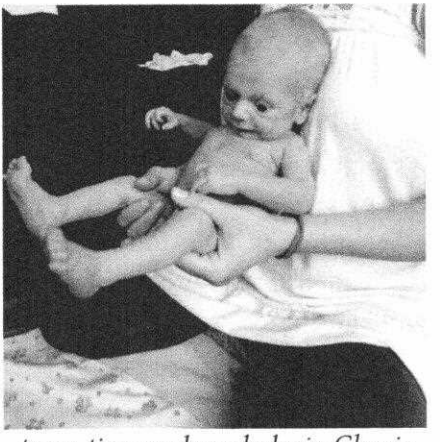
the right shows how to stand correctly. What's most intriguing is how my baby's potty posture (the deep squat, Classic EC Position) improves when I improve MY posture.

Here's how to maintain good posture while pottying your baby: Engage your core by pulling your belly button in toward your spine (keep breathing!) and do a slight kegel (lift up those labia like you're grabbing and pulling in a marble). Then bring your shoulders back toward each other and pull them down alongside your spine. Breathe and grow taller, then make sure your baby is in a comfortable (and improved) potty position.

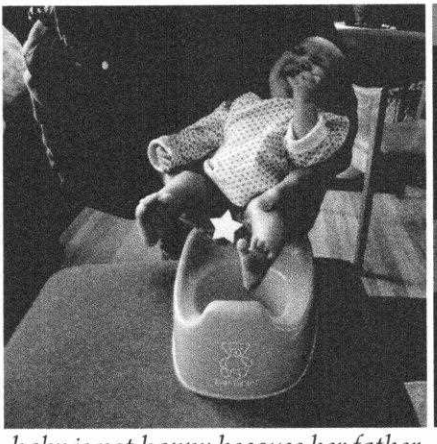
OTHER POSITION PHOTOS



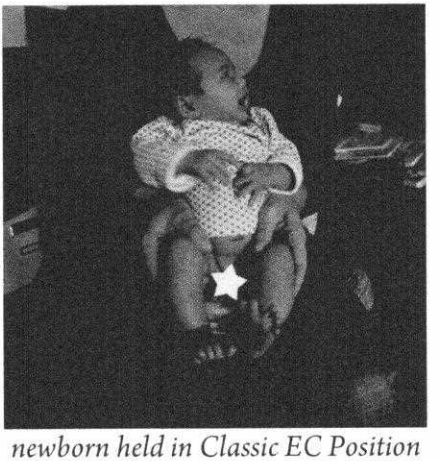
newborn in Classic EC Position over mini potty.



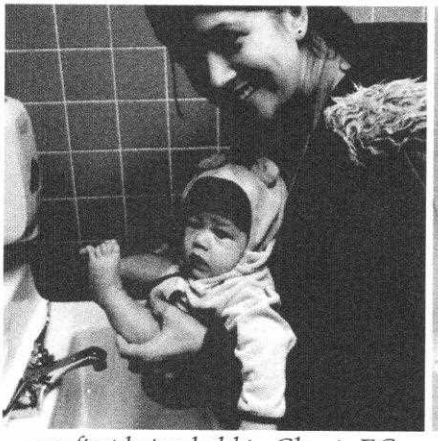
teeny-tiny newborn baby in Classic EC Position over a waterproof mat



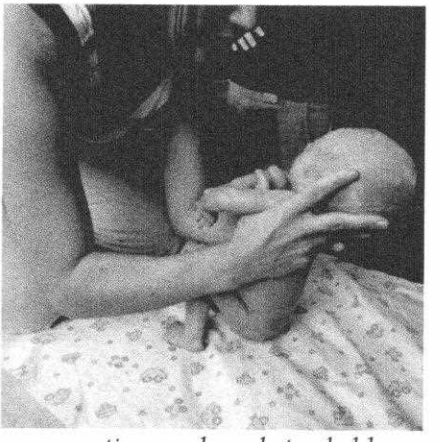
baby is not happy because her father is holding her out too far away from his body



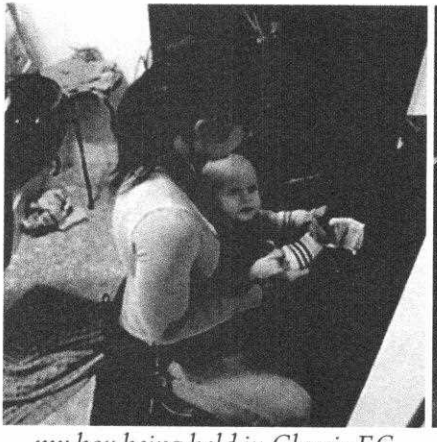
newborn held in Classic EC Position over a top hat potty



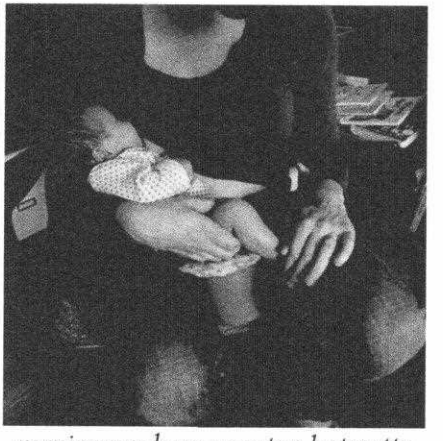
my first being held in Classic EC Position over a public sink



very tiny newborn being held in Bottom-back Position over a waterproof pad

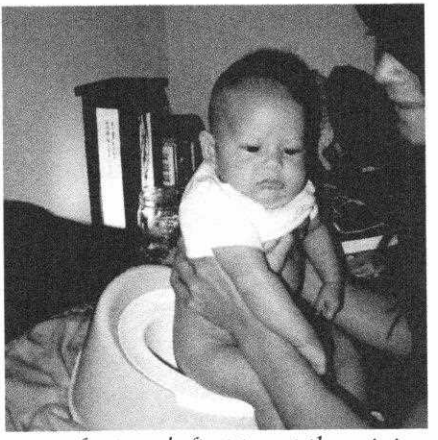


my boy being held in Classic EC Position while I squat at the big toilet

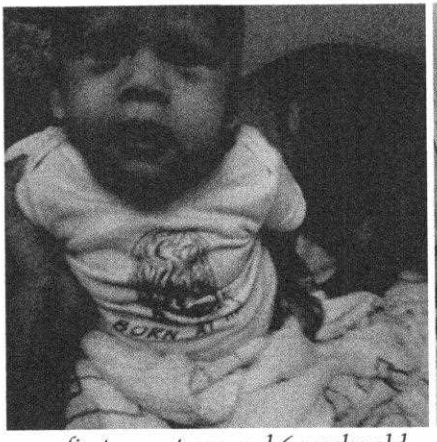


nursing newborn over top hat potty

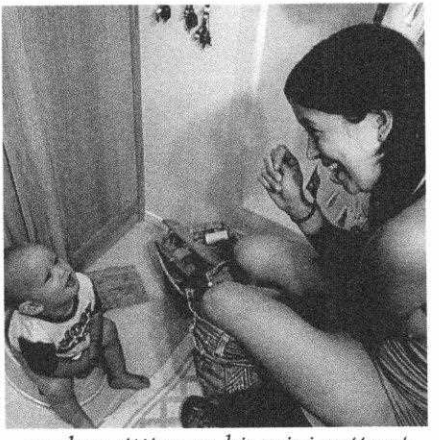
pottying my boy in the car on a cold day over a top hat potty



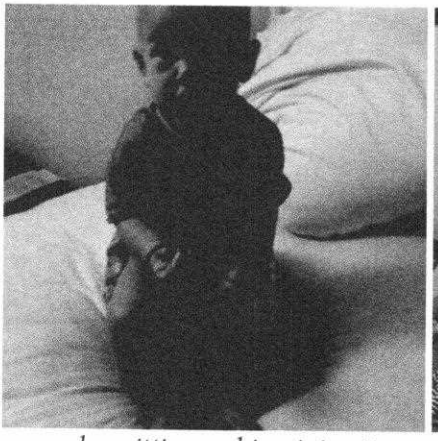
my first son's first try at the mini potty at 6 weeks old



my first son at around 6 weeks old, held with assistance on the mini potty

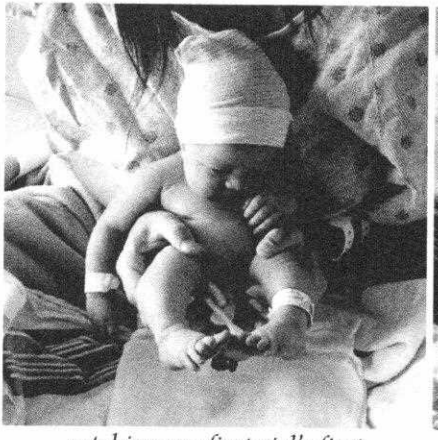


my boy sitting on his mini potty at 9 months old while I'm on mine :)

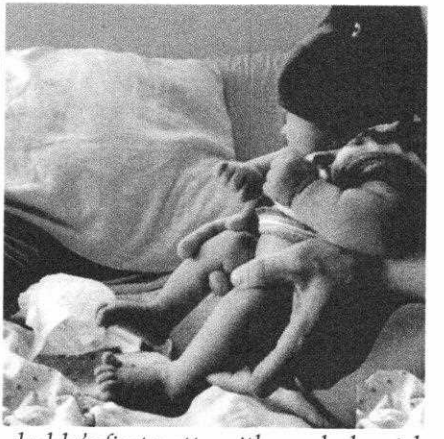


my boy sitting on his mini potty (with cozy) on his own for the first time, on the bed

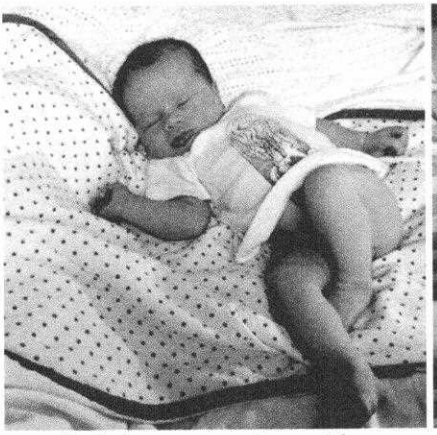
pottying my first girl at 3 days old in Classic EC Position over the top hat potty



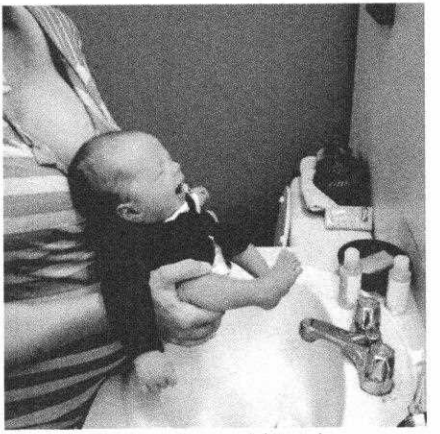
catching my first girl's first meconium poop, on a pad, on the day of her birth



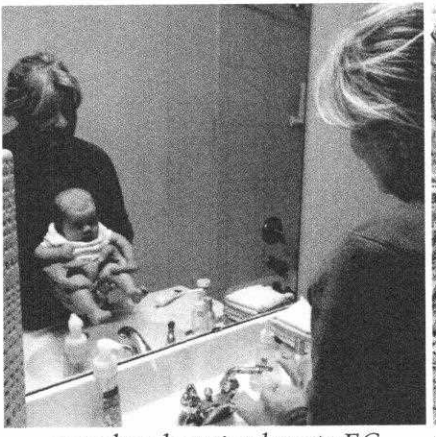
daddy's first potty with our baby girl at two days old, over a prefold



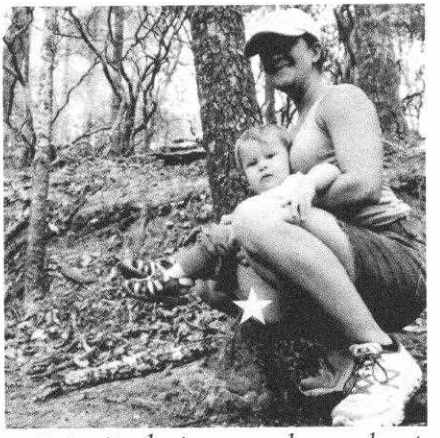
naked observation time with our newborn girl, over waterproof pad (see Appendix 1)



pottying days-old Isadora over the sink



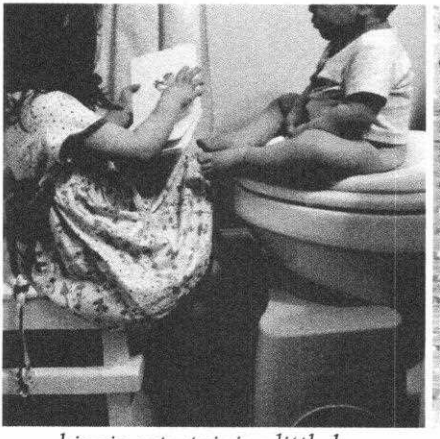
grandma learning how to EC my daughter, Isadora , classic hold over the sink



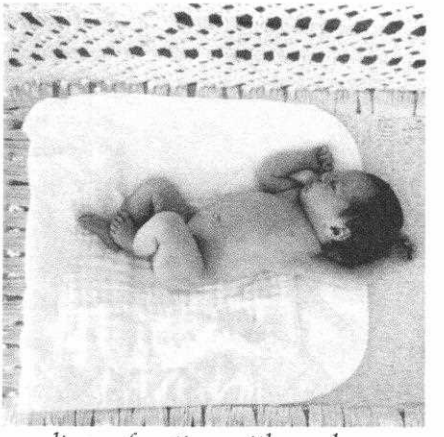
pottytunity during a mushroom hunt, squatting in classic hold

potty time in the shower with young toddler on mini potty

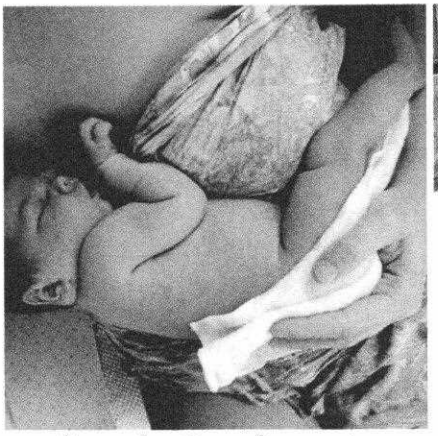
auntie potties newborn over top hat potty



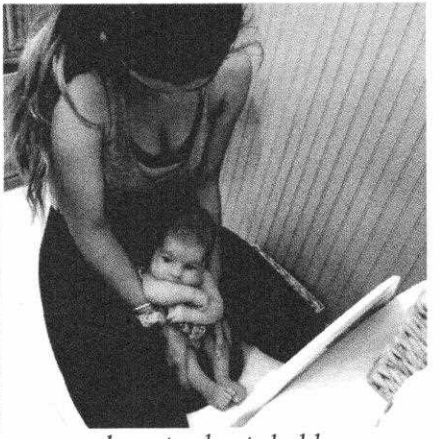
big sis entertaining little bro on the big toilet with seat reducer



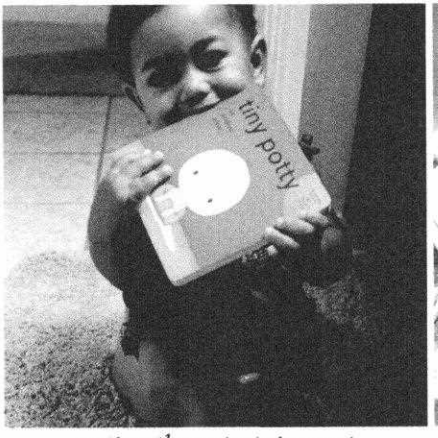
diaper-free time with newborn



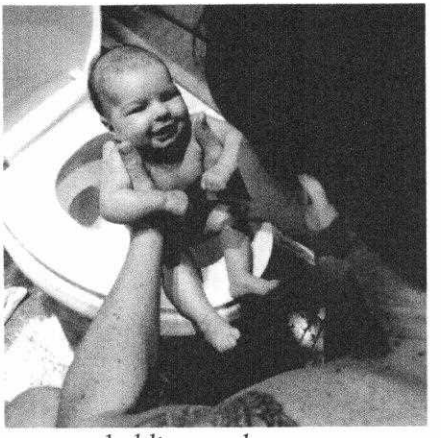
diaper-free time after nursing



newborn in classic hold over big toilet while sitting on it

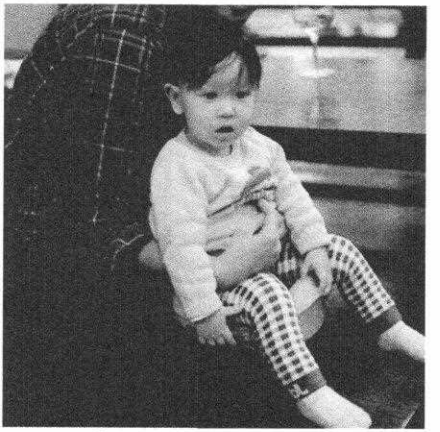


eating the entertainment at potty time!

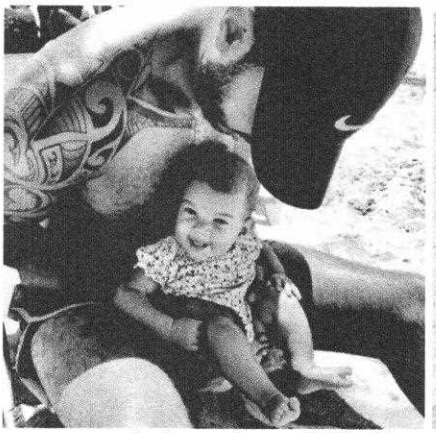


holding newborn on big toilet with daddy

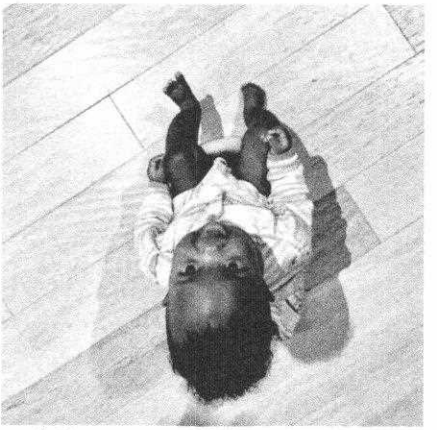
smile time pottying over the sink



discreet pottytunity on Potette Plus with rubber liner



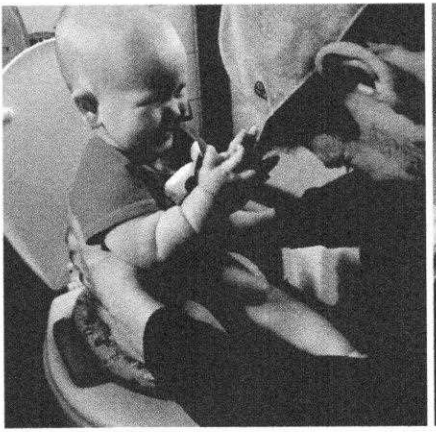
pottying baby in classic EC hold while sitting at the beach



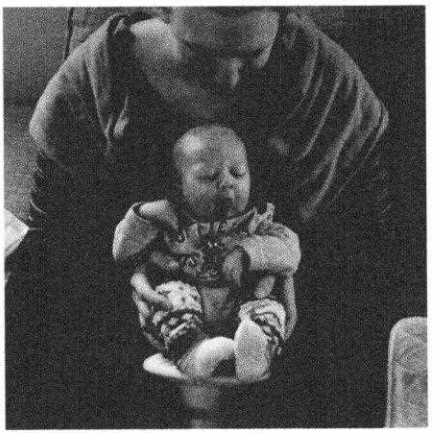
a different POV! baby on mini potty

daddy pottying baby in classic hold outside

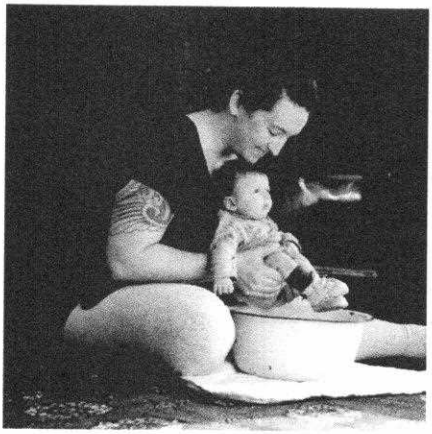
pottying young toddler on Potette Plus in nature



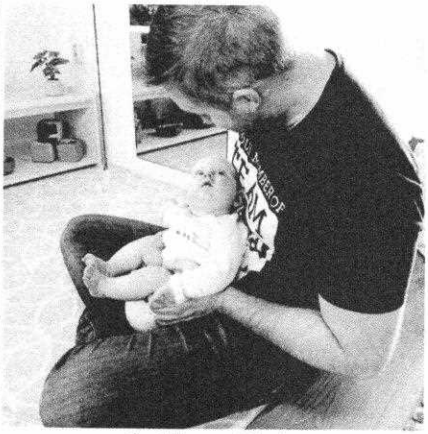
daddy and baby connection time on potty



pottying newborn in legwarmers on top hat potty, after babywearing



pottying newborn over a basin in a warm room

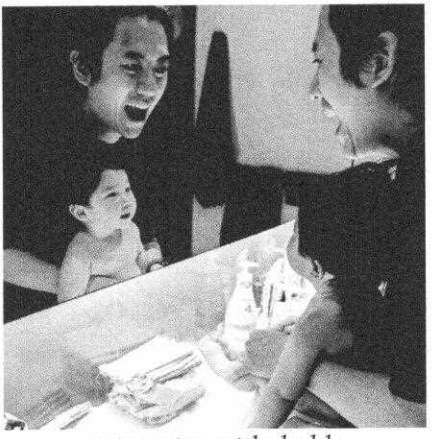


daddy and baby connecting at potty time

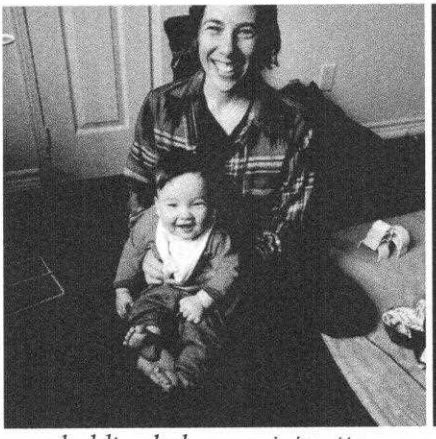
mom pottying baby over the sink in a public bathroom

signing sleep because of the book he's reading at potty time

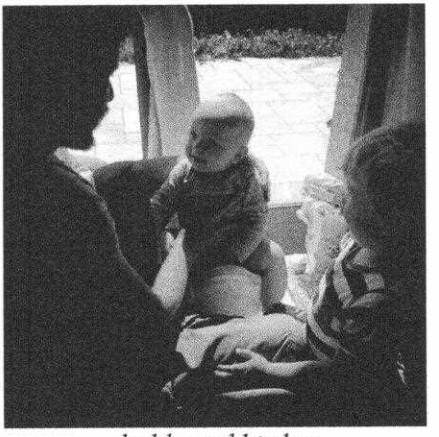
potty station at the changing table



connection with daddy on mini potty at the sink



holding baby on mini potty, facing out



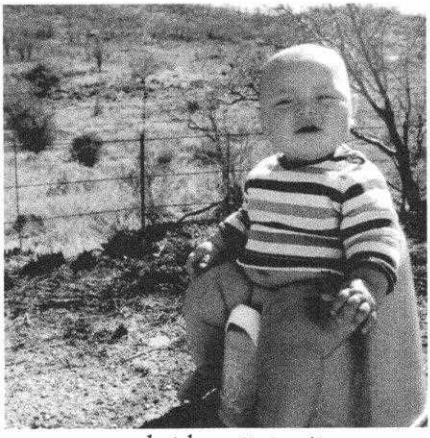
daddy and big bro holding baby on mini potty

pottying baby outside in classic hold while sitting

mom sitting on short stool holding baby in classic hold over toilet

holding baby over top hat potty on bed

pottying next to parked car



road-side pottytunity

daddy pottying newborn over top hat potty

Chapter 2:
Unique Situations
+ How-to's

7 Unique Situations

You will often find yourself in a situation that requires a unique and creative pottying solution.

This section will teach you how to potty your baby in various situations including:

1. Pottying While Breastfeeding
2. Pottying In Nature
3. City Pottying
4. Car Pottying (Next to Parked Car)
5. Car Pottying (Inside Parked Car)
6. Cold Weather ECing
7. Travel and EC

Pottying While Breastfeeding

NOTE: *I use the term "breastfeeding" throughout this book, but I consider bottle-feeding as one and the same. I know plenty of mothers who either choose not to or are unable to breastfeed, and they are some of the most incredible mothers I know. If you notice that your baby signals to potty during bottle-feeding, please follow these same instructions. Popping off the bottle occurs, after all, for the same reasons as popping off the breast (when we give our babies pumped breastmilk in a bottle this definitely happens).*

Some babies potty (pee, poop, or both) during breastfeeding, some right after. If this is part of your baby's natural timing, here's what you can do:

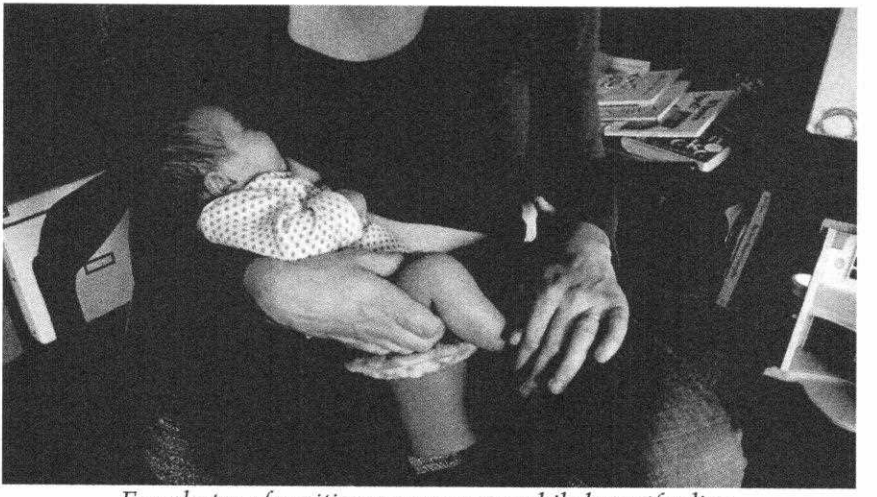
1. Hold a top hat potty or bowl between your legs during breastfeeding. It can be anything ranging from a mixing bowl to a Tupperware container to an actual "top hat potty" that was designed to be held nicely between the legs while sitting (see Supply List), or spread a "soaker pad" over your lap while nursing.

For a step-by-step photo demonstration of how to set up a soaker pad on your lap, see the Positions Gallery.

2. Nurse your baby diaper-free or at least dressed in easy-off bottoms, being sure to warm up the room and/or dress the baby in EC-friendly clothing on the legs and upper body (like a t-shirt with chaps or legwarmers).

3. When you notice that your baby "pops off the breast" (she just can't keep her latch), becomes still, toots, bears down, or some other signal happens, pause feeding and offer a pottytunity either in the container or over the pad.

4. Position your baby and cue. Many mothers cue their babies while still in breastfeeding position, ensuring the bowl or pad is under the baby's bum. Others switch to the classic EC position and make the cue, returning the baby to feeding once complete. Still others use the *cradled* classic EC position by keeping baby's little head in the crook of their elbow and moving the hands to hold baby's thighs over the bowl or pad. In any position, baby will get used to this as an okay place/way to eliminate.



For photos of positions you can use while breastfeeding, see the Positions Gallery.

Pottying while feeding can help your baby comfortably get in a full feed. Popping off the breast may not mean your baby is full or having nursing issues. It may mean she just can't eliminate while eating (who can?!).

Don't do anything super-disturbing during breastfeeding. This should be a time of peace and quiet for both of you, with little distraction. Quickly and quietly potty, then get back to nursing.

If pottying during breastfeeding is a challenge, nurse your baby diaper-free over a pad or in a loosely fitted diaper and simply cue along with her. This will at least strengthen the sound association and overall communication between you.

Constant peeing & pooping during breastfeeding will end (or lessen in frequency) as your baby matures, so don't worry. This too shall pass.

NOTE: If your baby is popping off the breast but not pottying, and has a lot of gas and "colicky" symptoms, look up "tongue ties" and "lip ties" and rule those out as potential causes of poor latch, fussiness, or gassiness. We discovered both a tongue tie and a lip tie with our fifth baby. Resolving the ties solved all these issues for us almost immediately.

Pottying in Nature

People sometimes think ECing in public outdoor places is not sanitary, so you can drum up some judgmental looks – or curious ones that lead to great conversations. (Honestly though, most people these days are more into looking at their smartphones than actual people, so this may be a moot point.)

Use your highest wisdom and never potty your baby where you wouldn't let your beloved canine pee or poop. Generally, if there is a public restroom nearby, use it (classic EC position over sink or toilet, cleaning as necessary), or bring your top hat potty or Potette Plus to use in the stall.

If there is no restroom in sight and you don't have a portable potty with you like a top hat potty or the Potette Plus, but there is a good spot to potty in nature, go for it! Just **be discreet** and **clean up after yourself.**

Follow the normal pottying steps I've already outlined. The only modification is that you will hold baby over grass, dirt, or some other natural surface. When baby is held in position and cued, he will generally go in any environment (so long as he needs to go).

A big variable here is the weather. If it's too cold, baby may protest and you'll either have to shield him from the breeze or remember to dress him in long socks or legwarmers underneath those pants next time (see the Supply List).

Another variable is distractability. If a mobile baby wants to crawl off when held over the ground, say or sing something to distract him as you matter-of-factly (but gently) position him & squat.

The best position to use in nature is the classic EC position while you are squatting yourself (below). Your legs shield him from wind and others' sight, and he feels safe against your chest with your body surrounding him.

However, for a very young baby, you can alternatively face him to you, "stand" him on a stone or surface, lean his rear back (help him sit into the position), and then cue him. I call this the bottom-back position (below).

For more photos of positions you can use in nature, see the Positions Gallery.

With pee, there's no need to clean up. It will evaporate, and it's even a little cleaner than dog pee (which is constantly deposited in nature). With poop, however, you will need to clean up. If baby is still breast-feeding and thus the poop is runny, simply cover it with other natural material (like soil, leaves, or grass). If baby's poop is more solid, carry bags with you (like biodegradable BioBags, available in pet supply stores) and throw it away properly (as you would with a dog).

Not that I'm comparing your baby with a dog!

City Pottying

EC in the city is very similar to EC in nature. The main differences are there are more people around, cars and buses scooting by, and delightful concrete instead of grass. Be discreet and clean up after yourself!

Again, if you can find a public restroom, potty your baby over the sink or toilet (hold over receptacle in the classic EC position), or bring a top hat potty or Potette Plus in your bag to use in the stall, and clean up as necessary. If not, time to get creative.

I've pottied my babies on discreet sections of the sidewalk/alley before when none of the nearby shops had a public bathroom. If there's grass nearby and not a huge crowd of people, we go there. But sometimes in highly populated areas, there is no grass and we have to potty city-style.

Car Pottying (Next to Parked Car)

I've often pottied our babies on the side of the road or in a parking lot if I've forgotten the portable top hat potty or mini potty in the van, so I choose to potty them next to it.

All you have to do, with a parked 4-door vehicle, is open both doors on the curb-side of the car so you are somewhat shielded from sight (with a parked 2-door or minivan just open the one door). You can sit on the seat inside the car or the step of your minivan and hold baby over the concrete in the classic EC position and cue. Or, better yet, you can get out of the car too and squat with baby (between the two open doors, or behind the one open door) while putting her into position and cueing.

If the outdoor cityscape is not amenable to pottying, try inside the parked car.

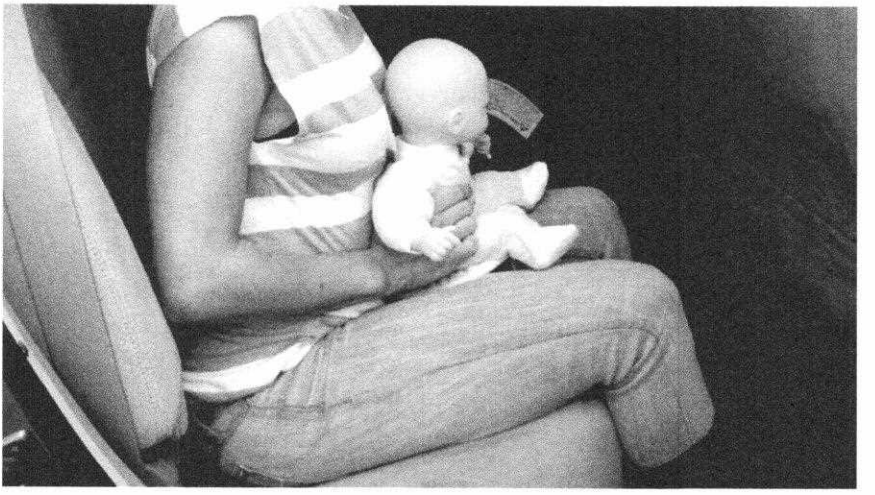
Car Pottying (Inside Parked Car)

Sometimes we pull over to potty our babies and it's really cold outside. What could have been a nature or city pee becomes an inside-the-car pee. We travel with a top hat potty (see our Supply List) that is held between the thighs – I highly recommend this. We also keep a mini potty in the van and a Potette Plus (which can be used over the ground

or as a toilet seat reducer on a public toilet or port-a-potty). A mini potty, bowl, tupperware, or other container in the car is definitely handy (even a frisbee works – yes, we've tried it!).

To potty in the car with a top hat potty, simply pull over and park in a safe place, put the top hat potty between your legs, at the ready, and get the baby out of the car seat. Remove her pants and diaper/undies (if any) while telling her you are going to go peepee, so she knows what to expect.

For more photos of positions you can use in the city and in and around the car, see the Positions Gallery.



Hold your baby over the potty, either facing you or facing away and cue. If baby is a little older and very distractable, simply hold her in the classic EC hold over the potty, so her weight is in your hands. Aim well, especially with boys! (Some people have a water bottle or jar handy in the car just for this boy-friendly occasion.)

After pottying, set the potty on the floor of the car temporarily, being careful not to spill it. Lay baby sideways on your lap or on an empty seat and put on the diaper (if any) and pants. Put baby back in car seat and then (if you have a potty cozy on it) pull down the lip of the cozy and dump the pee out the door. If it's poop too, dispose of it more sanitarily

(i.e., keep a plastic bag in the car, cover the potty with a wet wipe or upside down coffee cup, or even place a to-go or yogurt container in the potty and box up the treasure for later disposal). If you can't dispose of either, place a cloth in there to soak it up. Or, sometimes (as a passenger) I secure the potty between my feet on the floorboard to ensure it doesn't spill on the way home and I empty it there.

If you're using a mini potty, take baby out of the car seat and set her on the mini potty wherever you've safely set it (a few of our ECing community members have shared photos of their baby sitting on a mini potty in the open hatchback of their Subaru Outback, enjoying the view and sipping on some water).

Cold Weather ECing

If you live in a colder climate or your baby is tiny during a colder season, you can still practice EC successfully. Don't put it off until it's warm; you may miss a vital window of opportunity!

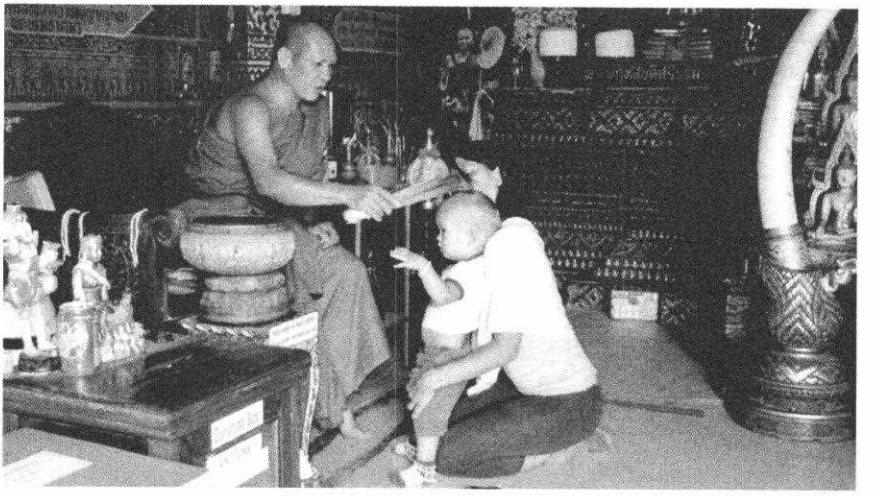
First, try to keep the climate within your home comfortable for everyone, as babies generally need to be warmer than we do. If there's a way to provide diaper-free time inside by occasionally warming the thermostat, do it. It's worth the learning experience for both of you. But remember, do naked time responsibly!

Next, dress the baby in EC-friendly layers. If you must bundle up indoors, layer long socks with legwarmers, then cover those all with wool socks and pants. Invest in wool; it enables you to use fewer layers. Use longer t-shirts and jackets/hoodies. Avoid the huge snowman onesie unless you need to go outside in the snow or freezing weather. Use an easy-on, easy-off diapering system if you use a diaper back-up.
When my oldest son was 11 months old and we were camping in the Northwest US, using split-crotch pants or chaps covered in a cloth diaper & diaper cover made for a seamless, warm, gentle middle-of-the-night potty. Under the pants, I used Rock-a-Thigh Baby socks and my babe was super-cozy for the midnight pee. See the Supply List to find these items.

Last, when out and about, bring a top hat or mini potty with you so you can potty within the warmth of you car and avoid pottying outdoors. Or find a public bathroom and utilize it. If your baby is in warm yet EC-friendly layers, he won't mind having them removed for a quick pee. But if it's really cold, always have a warm place in mind just in case (like your car).

The Eskimos reportedly would have their babies pee or poop into a container and then toss the refuse outdoors into the wild. If you live in a situation like that (or perhaps are camping), might as well try it!

Travel and EC



15 Tips for Practicing EC During Travel

1. Always locate the potty first. When entering the airport, a restaurant, or a shop, find the potty and offer a pottytunity first (if appropriate), then enjoy what you're there to do.

2. Use a back-up when you anticipate stress (or lack of potties). This can even be a disposable diaper; it won't ruin your progress with EC if you normally use cloth or underwear. Everyone will be happier if you use something at a time when you're likely to need it.

3. Wear your baby. You will be more in-touch with his signals, and he will be more likely to hold it while you find the proper receptacle/potty place.

4. Bring a small mini potty, Potette Plus, or top hat potty with you. Instead of filling your carry-ons with diapers, you can fit a small potty into the bag. Most airlines allow for a diaper bag as a bonus carry-on. Use it at your seat when that seatbelt sign prevents you from using the lavatory on the plane. Otherwise, hold your baby in-arms over the lavatory toilet or sink when it's time to go.

5. Be discreet and clean up after yourselves. Don't just pee your baby anywhere because you're in a third world country (and especially not if you're in a Westernized one). Most people prefer that you use the proper facilities. If you have to potty in nature, clean up so the remains don't attract wild animals.

6. Pack only what you need. You'd be surprised, EC on the road can sometimes be a lot more efficient than it is at home. No one is bored, everyone is in the present moment and connected to immediate needs, things move more smoothly. Bring the minimum of things and know that you can grab extra gear in most places along the way. Just remember that you'll probably be more attuned to your baby while traveling, and that misses will normally be only pees if you're paying attention and baby is simply adjusting. Most babies don't like to soil pants in public.

7. At every new place of lodging, set up that potty station FIRST. Show your baby to it, offer the potty, and generally get settled in. Whether at a hotel or in a tiny bungalow, having a little potty station is quite key.

8. On airplanes, request the bulkhead/bassinet seats when available. Especially on a long international flight, you'll appreciate both the bassinet and the legroom! It's priceless to have the room to set your potty on the carpet and potty your kiddo there when you can't get up. You can usually request these seats when you book your flights. Even airlines that no longer assign seats ahead of time will make an exception for those with lap babies.

9. For those who practice nighttime EC, set up your array of tools in your sleep space like you would at home. Try to emulate the home night pottying environment as much as possible. Again, pack light, but also try to make things easy and familiar during those wee hours of potty time.

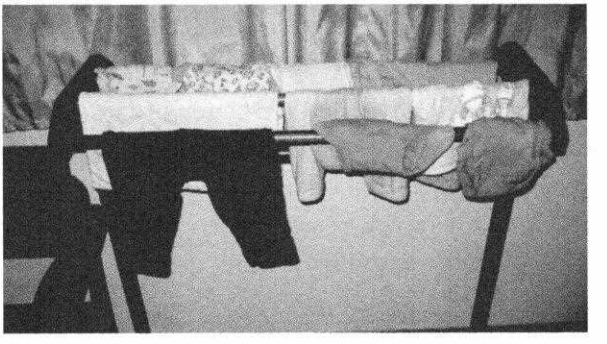
10. Always potty your baby when YOU need to go to the bathroom. Whether you're at the in-laws or in a restaurant, it's good practice to always bring baby with you and offer (if you can, hold her while you go, then switch!). It will help you remember to stay attuned to her needs, and it is convenient to go at the same time.

11. For the baby-pass-around at family or friends' homes, use a back-up on your baby OR pay attention to how much time has passed and take your baby to pee at the usual intervals (based on your baby's natural, usual potty rhythms, if you know them by now). If it's too

much to socialize and pay attention, or you don't want to draw "odd" attention to yourself, simply use a back-up. It won't ruin your practice to occasionally do this.

12. Stay consistent, catch the easy ones, and stay in tune with your own intuition. Don't just drop EC because you're on vacay. That is what screws things up when traveling, not the traveling itself! Keep doing the 4 Easy Catches, including your wake-up pees, your diaper change pottytunities, your poop catches, and your in and out catches. Pay attention to when that little voice in your head says "it's time." And, pay attention to when potty paranoia is mistaken for potty intuition. If you're nervous about having a miss in public, use a back-up diaper or trainers. Plain and simple.

13. If you have a bunch of wet ones in a row, remember that you're traveling! Baby is adjusting to new environments (and maybe a new time zone) on a more acute level than you are. Don't get frustrated and don't give up. Gather new information from a spree of misses and adjust your game. Your EC practice will get back on track when you return home if you stay consistent and seek support when necessary (like in our Private Support Group). Usually, misses while traveling indicate that baby is adjusting to the new environment. No need to freak out about it, just find ways to make it "home" and press on.



14. While driving or doing an extended road trip, always potty before getting in the car and at every stop, if appropriate. If you simply can not stop to potty your baby (and you expect this ahead of

time), just say, "go ahead and go in your diaper and I'll change you at the next stop." Some babies won't have it and will make you pull over. Have a potty ready in the car. Other babies will understand and oblige; it just depends on their temperament. Point is: offer at transition times while road-tripping, for sure.

15. If you pack a cloth back-up, you can easily hand-wash pee diapers in the sink and hang to dry, without soap (unless super-ammonia-y). Pack about 20 cloth prefolds (newborn size) and 2 covers and use my Quick EC Diapering Method for an easy way to use a back-up while on the go with a baby less than 9-14 months (i.e., still using diapers as a back-up) if you want to avoid using disposables on your trip. But, again, if you choose disposables, don't sweat it. Get back to cloth when you return (if you do cloth). No worries. Nothing will "un-teach" what they've already learned.

DISCOVER MORE: To learn more about ECing on outings, check out the video minicourse "ECing While Out and About" in Appendix 4.

NIGHTTIME EC

INTRODUCTION

You may choose to do EC at night, or you could skip it altogether. If you want to go for it, this special section will help.

I believe that nighttime EC is important, **but only if it provides *everyone* in the family with more restful sleep.** Some babies will become dry at night naturally after achieving daytime dryness through successful daytime EC, with no nighttime EC practice at all! Some will wet that back-up every night until 36 months comes along. It really depends.

If you're starting at birth, nighttime EC can make your baby more comfortable for better overall sleep during the first three months. At any other age, if you think it will help everyone get a better night's sleep, give nighttime EC a good, solid try, and ONLY keep doing it if it *continues* to provide you all with better sleep.

KEY POINTS + HOW-TO'S

BABIES OFTEN NEED TO PEE DURING THE NIGHT

Newborns wake every few hours because they're hungry, and upon waking, the antidiuretic hormone (ADH) wears off, their bladder fills, and they need to relieve themselves. They often cannot comfortably drift back to sleep without peeing, and certainly not if they feel wet. Pottying at night can help some babies sleep better and eventually prevent night-waking.

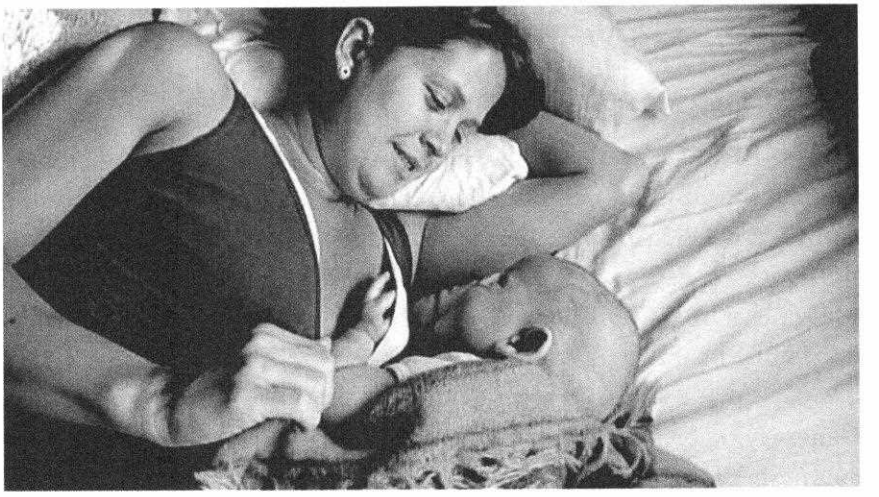
Generally, babies do not poop at night (very early in the morning is common, though). But peeing happens almost every time they wake up throughout the night. As baby connects his sleep cycles and his pees consolidate, you gradually end up with a child who sleeps through the night, dry.

FEEDING & SLEEPING BOTH TRUMP NIGHT POTTYING

When in doubt, I usually recommend you offer breast/bottle-feeding prior to pottying. In the middle of the night, some babies voice their upset very clearly if you try to potty them when they're hungry or needing the comfort that suckling provides. Eating usually trumps pottying. However, if your baby won't feed or feeds best with an empty bladder, you would potty her first. Only time and experience will tell you what your unique baby prefers.

The order in which things happen at night can make starting nighttime EC a tricky task (do I feed first, then potty, then feed more?). With my first, I'd offer him breastmilk first when he got squirmy, sometimes switching breasts to give him a fresh one, and if he settled back to sleep, I'd let him be without pottying or changing him.

If he continued to squirm (or yell out, cry, or crawl up to the headboard when he got older), I'd offer him the potty. With my fourth and fifth babies, I made it a habit to offer the potty first, then nurse them back to sleep, from birth. They would then feed and drift comfortably to sleep.



How to Get More Sleep While Doing Nighttime EC

Nap with Your Baby During the Day to Feel More Rested, Overall

This sub-section is mostly for parents with newborns (and for exhausted parents of older infants). To make waking a few times a night to EC and feed (or just do nighttime parenting) a realistic endeavor, it helps to nap with your newborn baby (at the same time and possibly in the same bed) every time you can throughout the day.

During her nap, if you are truly exhausted, it's not time to catch up on housekeeping or those nagging unopened emails – it's time for you to rest, too. If you are well-rested, especially in the first 6 months, you will be a happier parent, and your baby will get a higher level of presence from you, which we know she deserves. Everything will be less frustrating (especially EC).

Go to Sleep at the Same Time as Your Baby

When you both go to sleep at the same time, you will be on the same rhythm. Tune yourself into your baby at night by falling asleep with him. When he shifts to nurse, you will shift right there with him. If he continues to wriggle to ask to pee, you will not be overtired from having

had less sleep than him, you'll be in sync and nighttime EC will be much easier. And, in the daytime, you will feel more rested having had the longer, overall sleeping range with a few wake-ups sprinkled in (as opposed to your pre-baby normal amount of sleep with the wake-ups).

Example: You both go to bed at 8pm, waking in the morning at 7am. That's 11 total hours. You got up 3 times to nurse and potty, equalling 30 minutes of disrupted sleep each time. 11 hours minus 1.5 hours = **9.5 hours** = a great night's sleep for a new parent!!

Alternatively: Baby goes to bed at 8pm; you go to bed at 12 midnight; you both wake at 7am. You get 7 total hours of sleep, but you also got up 3 times to nurse and pee, equalling 30 minutes of disrupted sleep each time. Plus, you missed every pee! That's 7 hours minus 1.5 hours = **5.5 hours** = a horrible night's sleep for a new parent!

TIP: If you want some "grown-up" time after baby drifts off, you could maybe stay up for 30-60 minutes past the time your baby goes down. Wind yourself down by spending time with your partner or spouse, doing some peaceful meditation or yoga, or reading a book, and then nourish your body with a good, long sleep, in sync with your baby's nighttime rhythms.

Teach Baby How to Sleep Better

I am no expert on sleep training, but what I have learned about it over 5 babies has helped me become better at nighttime EC and better at helping everyone get more sleep – without using cry-it-out tactics. If you are struggling with constant night-waking and want to teach your baby how to sleep better, check out The Baby Sleep Site (I love their custom sleep plans), the Babywise book (minus the cry it out advice), or a very short book called Twelve Hours' Sleep by Twelve Weeks Old.

To Co-sleep or Not?

With a newborn and an infant of any age, the goal is for everyone in the family to maximize the amount and quality of sleep they get. You may

get this with baby sleeping in the other room, in your room, or snuggled right up against mom. Sharing sleep may be controversial in modern-day society, but parents the world over do it safely, and parents in the Western world are returning to the natural wisdom of co-sleeping in greater numbers every day. If your baby (and everyone else) gets the best sleep from the baby being in your bed, by all means, do it. Research it, make it safe, and do it if it feels right for your family.

Regarding your EC practice, co-sleeping can help you do nighttime EC. Your baby is designed to wriggle and complain when she needs nighttime help, and you are **designed** to wake easily to these signals and come to her aid. But it is not the only way. I coslept with my first baby for 2 years and woke every two hours to nurse and potty him. With my next four babies, I coslept with them for the first 4 months, then moved them into a crib in their own separate bedroom, with a monitor to help me stay connected to their overnight needs. In all five situations, I practiced nighttime EC very effectively. Co-sleeping is optional, as is nighttime EC, and there is no one right way to do it all, so do what works for you and your baby.

For the research on bedsharing, see Dr. Sears' Attachment Parenting book.

Advice for Non-Co-sleepers

If your baby is in the other room, or even separated from you in your room, it will be a different nighttime EC experience. Some parents may put the crib or bassinet in the room with them so they can hear the baby and attend to her needs more quickly, and with less disruption of sleep, but others may find that the baby can smell mama and will not sleep as well in the same room as her. With baby in the other room, EC can absolutely be done effectively at night if you're prepared.

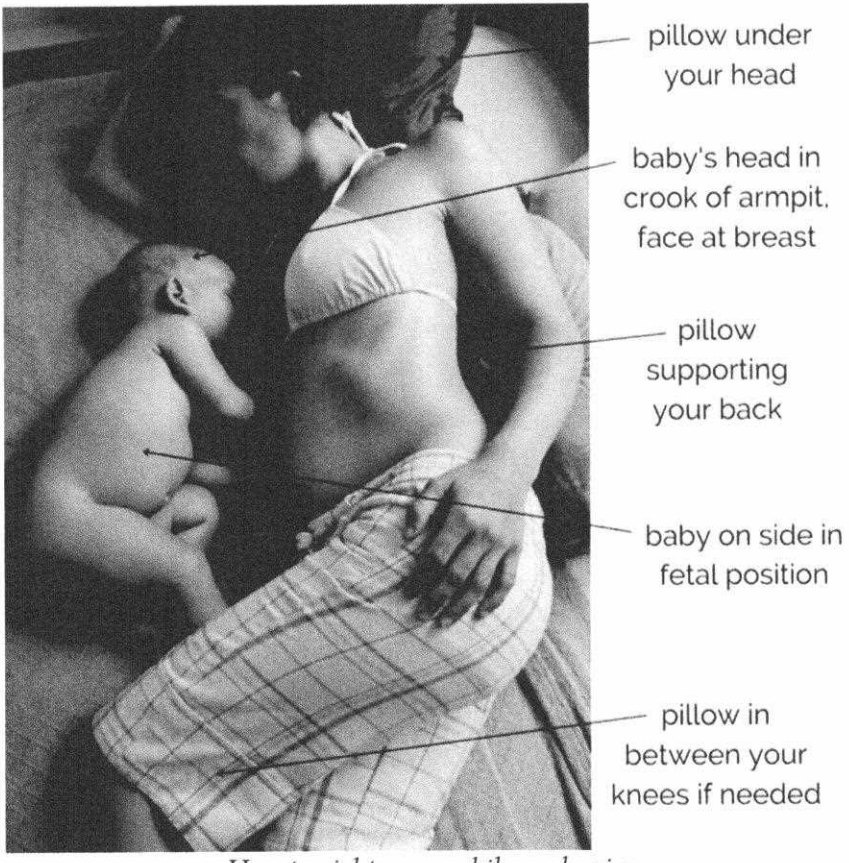
So, let's address some helpful solutions for babies sleeping separately from the parents. One of these options may work for you:

1. Use a baby monitor to hear when your baby wakes up and offer pottytunities during nighttime wake-ups and diaper changes. When your baby wakes you in the night, go to her quickly. Offer her a pottytunity whether her diaper is wet or not. A wet-diapered-baby may be holding the next pee for a chance to potty elsewhere, or if she's dry, she may have been waiting for you. Keep a potty handy next to the changing table or use the sink in a nearby bathroom. Then get baby back to sleep by nursing or whatever way you do it. (This is exactly what I've done with babies 2-5 who've slept in the other room starting at 4 months old and it has worked just fine.)
2. Offer pottytunities based on Timing. Some suggested nighttime pottytunities include:
   - pottying last thing before bedtime,
   - pottying baby when they wake during the night,
   - with a young toddler, setting an alarm to potty during the night. How to know what time to set the alarm? Write down when she wakes you to change a wet diaper, noticing a pattern over the course of a few days, and then set your alarm to wake up *right before* that usual time,
   - with a young toddler, doing a "dream pee" when you go to bed for the night at around 10 or 11pm, where you don't speak or turn on the lights, but simply potty your baby in a dream-like state,
   - offering a morning pottytunity right after waking.
1. 3. Just potty before bed and upon wake-up, changing only wet diapers at night without night pottying.

If You Do Co-sleep

If you do co-sleep, you may find it easier to potty at night, especially in the first few months of your baby's life. Generally, if you are sleeping curled up with your baby, he will wriggle around and maybe whimper or cry when he needs to go (or even yell out, cry, or crawl up to the headboard when older), or perhaps some nights he signals *when* he goes because he's just plain tired. Some nights he may want to sleep and not potty; some he may want a dry diaper all night.

You can offer food first, then see if he settles, and if not, offer the potty. Or, you can potty first and then nurse back to sleep. This is how to night-nurse while co-sleeping:

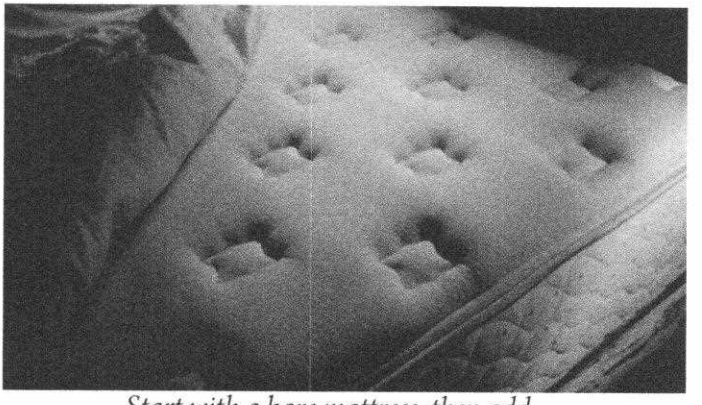

pillow under your head
baby's head in crook of armpit, face at breast
pillow supporting your back
baby on side in fetal position
pillow in between your knees if needed

How to night-nurse while co-sleeping

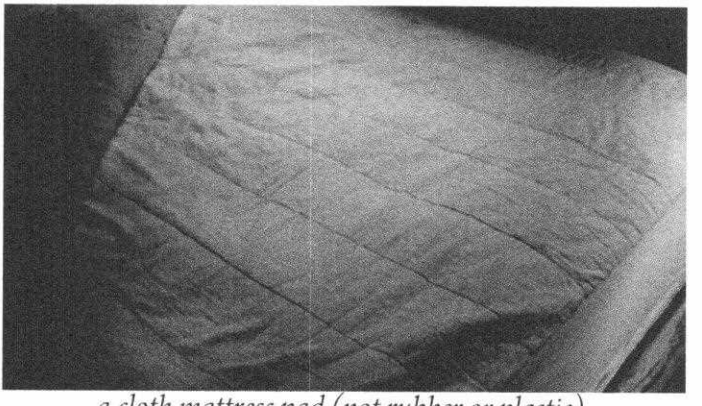
How to Protect Your Bed

Layer a cloth mattress pad (not rubber or plastic which make baby sweat) over the mattress, topped by a wool puddle pad, topped by a fitted cotton sheet, topped by you and your baby, topped by your blankets. When you have a miss, simply put a cloth prefold (diaper) directly on the pee puddle on the sheet and the diaper will soak the pee into itself without leaving a trace on the sheet or the bed below.

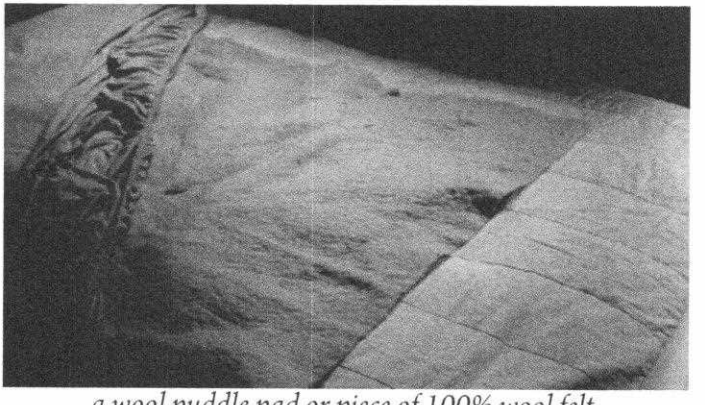
Here is a photo-by-photo demonstration of how to set up your bed protection:



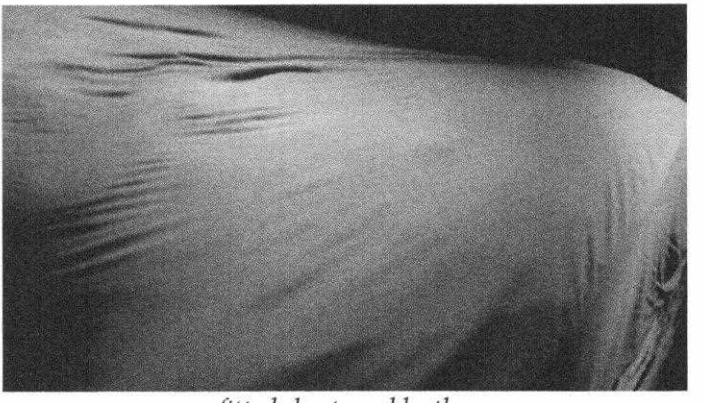
Start with a bare mattress, then add...



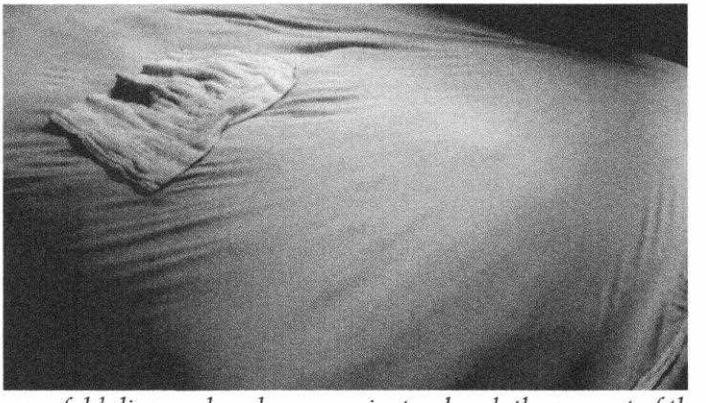
a cloth mattress pad (not rubber or plastic),



a wool puddle pad or piece of 100% wool felt,



a fitted sheet, and lastly...



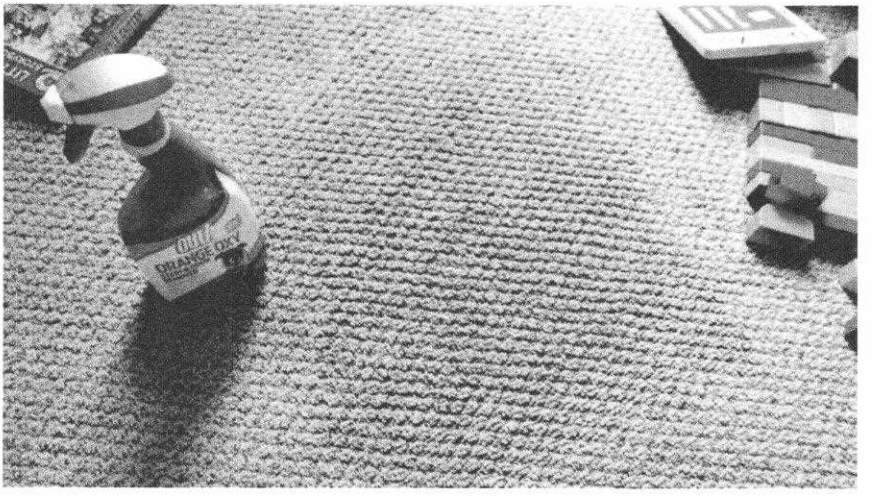
a cotton prefold diaper placed over a miss to absorb the pee out of the sheet and wool. After a few hours, the sheet & wool will be dry, and you will only have to wash the diaper.

How to Clean Baby Pee Out of a Mattress (or Carpet, for that Matter)

If I've got my mattress pad or wool soaker in place, as I've explained above, I will rarely need to clean pee out of the mattress. However, sometimes I'm not prepared, or baby pees on a different beloved surface, and I need to clean that pee out so it doesn't smell. Maybe you've been in the same boat.

I've had pee on my mattress, my baby's mattress, our former couch (appropriately nicknamed "the peepee couch"), our brand-new carpet,

our rugs, you name it, it's been peed on by a baby. The great thing is that baby pee is usually not that smelly and cleans up nicely. The better thing is that the product I use to clean up baby pee also works for throw-up, poop, mud, wine, juice, and blood, even if it's sat there for a really long time, on most absorbent surfaces. It is truly a lifesaver, so I hope this section is helpful for those of you with baby pee cleanup questions.



Although I have read up on several natural, homemade pee-cleaning concoctions, which you're welcome to research and use, when dealing with bodily fluids, I reach straight for the "sure thing." I use a product called OUT! Orange Oxy Stain and Odor Remover – it has a puppy dog on the bottle. But fear not! It is not just for pups. OUT! works so well for babies and toddlers and allllll the messes they create with their bodily fluids. (At the time of this printing, I use this and it is available at Amazon. If you can't find it, find something that cleans with "oxy" power.)

What to do: Blot the area with a towel or paper towels and remove any solids (if throw-up) from the soiled area. First, always test an area of your carpet or mattress or coach to ensure OUT! will not stain the material. Next, let's clean it up!

Saturate the soiled area with OUT! Orange Oxy Stain and Odor Remover. When I say saturate, I mean saturate it! Spray so much it will "out-soak" the pee in your mattress padding or carpet padding, spreading a few inches beyond where you think the pee (or otherwise) has spread, and getting just as deep into any padding. Let it sit for some time, covered with a damp rag or hand towel – the bottle says 5 minutes minimum, but I usually leave it to soak for several hours. After some time, come back and blot again with a towel or paper towels. Then, check to see if the oxy has eaten up all the smell (or any stains if it's mud or wine) or not. How to check if it's a done deal? I smell it just to be sure the smell is gone. I don't really know of a nicer way to check, so put your nose to the mattress or carpet and see if it smells like urine (or whatever) still. If it does, repeat the entire process once more.

If the smell is gone and the OUT! appears to have worked, it's time to let it dry. If it's my mattress, I will keep the sheets off the bed until it's dry to the touch, or if I need to sleep, I'll lay a fresh dry towel on top of the spot and put my fitted sheet back on the mattress over it. I then remove the towel layer the next day after it has soaked up the rest of the moisture. If it's carpet, I lay a fresh dry hand towel on top of the spot on the carpet to remind myself not to step on it until it is completely dried, or I leave it uncovered to air dry. Drying can take up to a day if it was a large spot. If it's our couch, I do the same as I do with carpet so no one sits on it and smells like orange all day long.

Night Pottying Troubleshooting

Your baby may be content with pottying at night in earlier months, and then it may change. A royal struggle breaks out every time he signals but resists the act of pottying. He'd rather be asleep, but he's not able to rest because he needs to pee.

What to do when night pottying becomes a challenge?

1. Be sure the lighting where you potty your baby is dimmed (or use a very dim LED nightlight that stays on all night).

2. Be sure the temperature in the room is comfortable. Put a warm potty cozy on your potty if you use one.
3. Minimize the amount of clothing you'll need to remove, but make sure baby is still warm and cozy in what's left.
4. Experiment with letting your baby sleep diaper-free (over a soaker pad), in undies, in training pants, or in diapers (cloth or disposable) to see which back-up most invokes your baby's instincts to signal and pee. Every baby differs, and individual babies will often change their preferences over time.
5. Try pottying first before nursing, then nursing first before pottying – see which order your baby prefers. If you potty first and your baby fusses about it, soothe your baby by shushing, rocking, or snuggling on the way to the potty spot.
6. Try nursing *while* pottying baby, whether he is over the sink, on the top hat potty or mini potty, or naked over a pad. It may take some balancing to nurse and potty at the same time, but some babies can only relax enough in this way. Cue while you nurse to encourage him to release.
7. Go to sleep at the same time your baby does, no more than a 1/2 hour later. If you are usually groggy at night, you will be 100% more in-tune with and able to respond to nighttime pottying signals if you do this, feeling more rested and patient, too.
8. Nap with your younger baby when she naps during the day. Resist "getting things done" and rest up yourself! This makes nighttime parenting easier.
9. If you find that you're missing a lot at night, it could mean that you're doing too much during the day and/or not taking very good care of yourself. If you can, cut back on extra work, chores, appointments, playdates, and errands. Ask others to help you out during the day, so you don't spend all your sleeping hours recovering (and not in-tune with baby). Exercise with your baby every day – this will boost your overall energy. And watch what you eat – if you're still eating like you were when you were pregnant, you may feel low-energy during the postpartum phase.
10. Try giving baby a bath before going to sleep at night. This will help her more easily float into a deep sleep and feel more rested when she wakes to nurse/pee.

11. Try a new position, receptacle, and/or environment. Try going from a normal sitting on the mini-potty position to turning the potty around and holding baby in the classic EC position, leaning baby's body up against your chest for nighttime support. Try pottying baby in the bathroom over the sink in cradled classic EC position, or squat with baby in classic EC position close to the ground next to your bed over a wide, shallow tray or bin.
12. If you think your baby is signaling, but he's resisting night pottying, simply feed him and see if he goes back to sleep. He may wait until the next time when he is really ready to wake up and potty. He may have learned that he can now hold it longer. He may be teething, sick, or going through a growth spurt and is too tired to budge. If he goes back to sleep, let him be until he *really* asks to be pottied.
13. Talk to the baby who is giving obvious potty signals to wake her up a bit before offering the potty. Say something gently, softly, such as, "Do you need to go peepee?" or "I'm going to take you to the bathroom" while touching her lightly. Don't worry; your stimulation won't ruin rest time. After relieving herself and getting a clean diaper, she will likely fall right back to sleep.
14. Run the sink water or sing quietly to the baby who fusses when pottied at night. Often this will relax him and even if he continues to fuss, he will probably pee with the song (we like "Twinkle, Twinkle") or the sound of running water.
15. If you've been pottying on the bed (in potty or on pad) and it no longer works, bring baby to the bathroom and offer her the sink or toilet under dimmed lighting. Some babies will prefer to eliminate where the grown-ups go, in the bathroom, even during the night! Peeing on the bed (even though it's in a potty or on a mat) may feel counter-instinctual (remember, they don't want to soil their bed).
16. If your baby sleeps naked or in undies and regularly pees on the bed, and it's happening too often for your nerves or intuitive sense to handle, put that baby in a cloth or biodegradable diaper back-up! **You may be teaching baby to wet the bed.** Don't let the pride of having a "diaper-free baby" hinder your sanity and sense. "Diaper-free" means free from exclusive dependence upon diapers, not naked-peeing-everywhere-even-at-night.

17. If all else fails, pause nighttime pottying. If baby asks for it again, follow her lead and offer it. If baby would rather sleep, it is probably better for everyone's sleep to just let her be. If you stop night pottying altogether, see the following sub-section, below for tips on doing so.
18. If you stop or pause nighttime EC, focus on your daytime EC and trust that your baby will eventually integrate this learning into his nighttime routine.
19. **Begin to do "dream pees" at night anytime from 18-30 months to help your child stay dry without doing nighttime EC. See The Dream Pee later in this section.**

If You Choose Not to Night Potty

If offering the potty at night disturbs either of your sleep, or anyone else's in the family, I say don't do it. Often night dryness follows day dryness later on, so it's not a huge deal. For now, either switch to cloth diapers at night, use a modified disposable diaper (see the How to Diaper with EC section), OR use a biodegradable diaper backup.

Will skipping nighttime EC make a difference? Let me illustrate two very different situations from my personal experience. With my first baby, I used cloth diapers at night and practiced EC all night for two years (he woke every 2 hours to nurse and potty, and we coslept). With my second baby, I used disposables at night and didn't potty her at night after she moved to her own crib at about 4 months old (she slept through the night at around 7 months old). Both were completely dry and diaper-free at night at 26 months on the nose.

We also moved our fifth baby into a crib at 4 months old. We did nighttime EC with her from birth to 15 months – when she woke we offered – and at 15 months she stopped going when we offered (so we stopped offering). She was dry all night at 16 months, and at 17 months we took her out of diapers at night. In our GDF community, I've heard of babies who were dry all night as early as 14 months old (they coslept and nursed to sleep; she slept through the night), and some babies that have had difficulties with nighttime dryness up to 3 or 4 years of age.

The point is, *skipping nighttime EC is not a deal-breaker* and, in the end, it's fine to do whatever's right for your individual family. Experiment, give it a go, start and stop when you please, and visit our Support Group for help if you need some personalized advice.

If you skip night EC (for now or for good), **simply change your baby if/when she wakes you, and get on with your sleep.** Some folks use "dream pees" from around 18-30 months old to help their child stay dry all night, yet some still wait it out until nighttime dryness naturally occurs. We'll discuss dream pees next.

I want you to be a happy, rested parent and for your baby to be happier and less fussy during the day because she is getting solid sleep at night and naps. Do what works!

The Dream Pee

If you don't want to do nighttime EC, don't want to use diapers at night, or want your child potty trained at night, but you keep having misses, the "dream pee" might just solve your nighttime woes. Across my 5 babies, I found that a strategically placed dream pee helped them stay dry at night, and sleep better, during certain times of their young toddler years.

What is a Dream Pee?

The definition of a dream pee is: A middle of the night pee initiated by the parent (not the child) that is done without speaking or turning on the lights, with the intention of helping a child stay dry all night.

Whether You Should Do a Dream Pee at Night

Some parents worry that they'll fully wake their child if they do the dream pee incorrectly. Others don't want to disturb their baby's sleep, at any cost. Still others might benefit from a dream pee.

Typically a dream pee is a useful tool when your child is having daytime success, is walking, and also is moving into a toddler bed. I don't recommend waking a 0-12 month baby to pee. When babies hit the age

of sleeping more soundly through the night, the dream pee is effective. I recommend starting dream pees at around 15-18 months, continuing as necessary until 24-36 months.

The Difference Between Nighttime EC and a Dream Pee

Nighttime EC is baby-led - so when baby or toddler wakes up, you take them to the potty and then get them back to sleep. This is usually done from birth to 12-18 months. It really just depends. When you're doing just dream pees, you are actually consciously moving from baby-led pottying all night to a "let's help baby keep dry and not have to wake to pee, by taking him at night in a sleepy state" kind of a thing. You, the parent, initiate a dream pee, so that's the main difference. Of course, there is often a transitional piece in between, and a bunch of overlap.

You can do nighttime EC (responding to baby's needs to pee at night every time they wake) in combination with dream pees...they can happen simultaneously and eventually, hopefully, the child will stop waking to pee altogether, switching gears to only dream pees (which can prevent night waking from needing to pee), followed at some point by the dream pee being completely unnecessary.

Reasons You Might Want To Do a Dream Pee

- You don't want to use diapers at night
- If your baby or toddler wears diapers at night, and you'd like them to stay as dry as possible
- You want to support your child in being dry (and comfortable) all night
- Your child's sleep is regularly disturbed from being wet
- Your child wets the bed each night but does not have medical bed-wetting issues
- You are tired of changing wet sheets/wet diapers all night!!
- Your baby or toddler is dry during the awake hours but not-so-much at night
- You have a deep sleeper on your hands, one who sleeps straight through peeing their bed, despite being soaked.

If any of these resonate, let's learn how to do a dream pee.

How To Do a Dream Pee

1. **Pick a time to do it** - common times include when you, the parent, go to bed, such as within the 10pm-12am range. Other times include very early in the morning, such as 4 or 5am. I recommend doing it when you go to bed.

2. **Set up the night potty environment in the child's bedroom** (if possible)

--**Set up the night potty station** (this is ours, below) - for a young toddler, this would be a small rug, a mini potty, a lamp with dimmer or a dim nightlight, wipes or toilet paper if they typically poop at night; for a baby who is still ECed in-arms, you'd either potty them in-arms, in the room if possible, over a top hat potty, a mini potty, or at the sink or toilet.

--**Double-make the bed** by layering in this order: mattress, mattress protector, fitted sheet, mattress protector, fitted sheet, top sheet, blanket or comforter. If you have a miss in the night, remove any wet bedding, remove the top fitted sheet and top mattress protector, and there will be a dry sheet below it.

--**Have a fleece blanket nearby** in case you don't want to change sheets in the middle of the night if there's been an accident - in this case just throw the fleece blanket on top of the wet area and your child can sleep on the fleece without it soaking through.

--**Use a baby monitor** so you can see and hear if baby is tossing and turning from either being wet or needing to pee.

--**Install a dimmer or nightlight** in their room that is not so bright that it disturbs sleep, but that will enable you to see to potty baby at night (if their room is really dark).

--**Use white noise** - this gives them a sound to focus on and creates consistency in the sleep space (almost like a hypnotic state that can't be broken even with a dream pee).

--**Choose your back-up** - do you want to dress baby in a diaper at night or undies only, undies and pants, or pants only? Or do you want them to feel the opposite of a diaper and sleep naked from the waist down? Choose whichever back-up most inspires your child to stay dry, enables her to sleep longer and deeper, or is the easiest to remove at night. There literally is no wrong answer here.

Tip: read your child my Night Potty Board Book before bed so they can see the night potty station in action before they experience it. See Appendix 4.

3. **How to do it, step-by-step.** At the time you've selected, go to your child's room and quietly pick them up from bed. Don't say anything unless you want to make shushing or soothing noises. Do not turn on any lights or otherwise change the vibe of the room. Hold them close and, if possible, remove the pants and any diaper back-up while you're standing and holding them close, with one hand (practice this during the day when you can see what you're

doing, and obviously be careful). If you've just got them commando in pants-only, stand them up in front of the toilet while they lean on you and pull the pants down there.

Sit baby gently on the potty and squat in front of it yourself, letting their head lay down against your knees if that helps, and gently say "pssss" or "shhhhh" or "go peepee" and relax. If they need to go they will go. (Remember, this is a "pottytunity" - an opportunity to go potty - so if they don't go it's not a big deal.) Then gently pull pants back up and get them back to sleep however you usually do. With a young toddler who is no longer nursing, place them back into bed quietly and quickly and leave the room without a word. It's like it never happened.

If The Dream Pee Doesn't Work - Troubleshooting

If the middle of the night pottytunity is not working for your baby or toddler, here are some ideas of how to make the dream pee work:

1. Babies - never wake a baby to pee! If you're waking up a 0-12 month baby to pee at night, please consider doing Nighttime EC, which is baby-led, instead.

2. Try a later time - sometimes we are offering too early in the night, so set an alarm for 1 or 2am and see if that works.

3. Try early in the morning instead of late at night - some babies soak their diaper right before waking in the early morning, so you can help them stay dry by offering at 3 or 4am. I wouldn't offer at 5 or 6am because often a baby will not go back to sleep.

4. Try two dream pees instead of one - if you're set on this working and you don't mind disrupting your own sleep, offer once when you go to bed at 10 or 11pm and then once more at 4am or so.

5. Nursing moms: have your partner potty them at night instead of you - it may be less disturbing if mama doesn't come into the room to do this.

6. Change the back-up - go back to a disposable if you find that they deter wetting more than whatever you're using now - I recommend the biodegradable disposable diapers by Dyper if you're going with this option, as no other diaper ever biodegrades! If moving to commando or naked at night is something you want to try, go for it. If your child is in Tiny Undies and pants during the day, and is regularly dry, try that at night, too. Often a child gets used to a backup and will prefer it day and night, but has no way to tell us about their preference. Use whatever works, no judgment.

7. If they refuse the mini potty or simply won't go on it, try in-arms for a younger baby over the sink or toilet or mini potty, or bring them to a nearby big toilet with seat reducer on it (this is not preferable, but give it a try). During the day try to train them on using the mini potty so at night it is more useful.

8. If you'd rather follow your child, potty them anytime *they* wake up at night, if they're willing. This is what we call "nighttime EC" which we covered earlier in this section.

9. If everyone's sleep is ruined and/or you're sick of wet sheets or middle-of-the-night toddler parties...or resistance...**stop.** Do not do any more dream pees for several months, if ever again. Use a diaper as a back-up for now and be sure to do the before-bedtime pee, limit fluids for the 2 hours before bed, and then potty immediately upon waking. You'll eventually be out of the woods, naturally, so do not fret and just pause the night for now.

What's Next? Do We Do Dream Pees Forever?

No, you won't have to do the dream pee forever. If your baby stops going when you offer at night, or majorly refuses, just stop and see what happens. Use the backup that works best for you both, double-make the bed if necessary, and only potty at night if it makes baby or toddler more comfortable, especially if you are the one initiating it.

If dream pees DO work for you, you can choose to gradually offer later in the night or later in the early morning until the dream pee is no longer necessary - the habit to stay dry will stick and your child will outgrow this phase. If they don't outgrow it, and your child is wetting the bed at 5 or 6 years old, please see your pediatrician to rule out the possibility of medical bedwetting.

If you need help with sleep training that does not include cry-it-out (CIO), please visit my friends at The Baby Sleep Site and get a customized sleep plan, or pore over their comprehensive blog. We got a custom sleep plan with two of ours and it was one of the best decisions I've ever made. Your baby deserves sleep and so do you, and some babies are trickier than others. Trust me, everyone wins when baby deeply sleeps at an appropriate age.

And that's it. The dream pee - the parent-initiated, help-baby-stay-dry-at-night, middle-of-the-night pottytunity, in a nutshell.

How I've Done Our Nighttime Routines, Stage by Stage

I hope that sharing my nighttime EC journey with you will help you in some way. I've certainly tried most everything. I'll include two examples from my five babies – baby #1 and baby #4 – so you can see how things can vary. Feel free to skip past these stories for further how-to's.

Baby #1 – Our Newborn Night Pottying Routine (0-4 Months)

When my first baby was little bitty, he hated the classic EC position so I created what I call Bottom-back Position (see the Positions Gallery) and peed him at night on the leftover disposable pads from my homebirth.

He'd pee on the pad; I'd fold it over and re-use the dry area for the next one. He peed so much at this age that *I relied heavily on offering pottytunities at all nighttime* ***diaper changes***. I'd wake up when he was

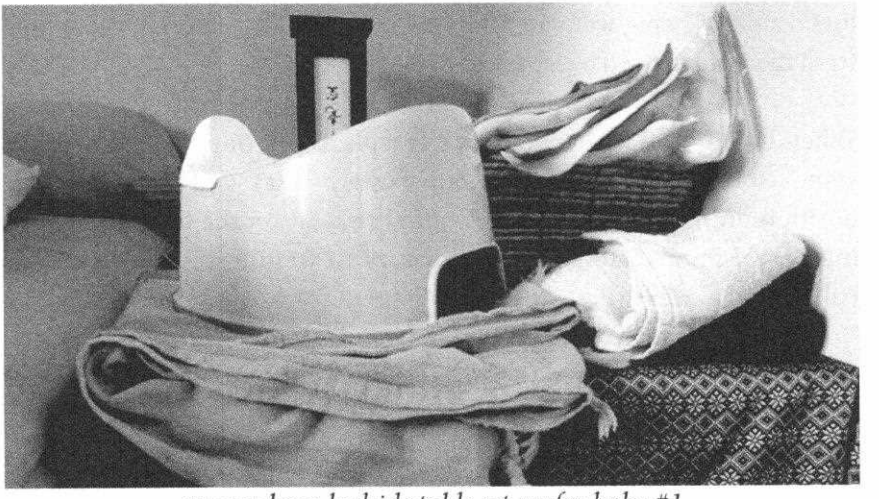
fussing about being wet and offer him a pottytunity before putting on a fresh diaper. He peed every time.

When I ran out of leftover disposable pads to pee him on, I invested in some cloth/plastic ones (see our Supply List) and did the same position until he was 6 weeks old and could sit on the mini potty with my help. I immediately got a potty cozy to wrap it in warmth, as our baby hated a cold seat.

Admittedly, I was terrified of cloth diapers and Snappis at the time, so I used disposables at night until I found a good nighttime dryness solution with cloth (Which I did! I'll share this later in the section called How to Diaper with EC.). The disposables I used were Seventh Generation brand, and they were certainly not Huggies. They still helped him feel wet while holding in the leaks.

Baby #1 – My Newborn Bedside Setup (0-4 Months)

I co-sleep with my babies during this period, so I set up a sort of "bumper table" next to the bed – a coffee table with a long pillow on it that comes up higher than our mattress. Next to the pillow on the table was a light with a dimmer switch connected to it (for late-night visibility during pottying), the BBSP with potty cozy on, and a variety of baskets containing: some cloth wipes to dry him before putting the diaper back on; a changing/peeing on blanket (cloth on one side and plastic on the other); my wipe warmer (glowing with its built-in nightlight) full of scrumptiously warm disposable wipes; disposable and cloth diapers, and a jar of Earth Mama Angel Baby Bottom Balm (invaluable for those red, smelly crevices!). See the Supply List for where I found all these items.



my newborn bedside table set-up for baby #1

This set-up made it so much easier for me to potty my baby at night. Some nights were dry. Some nights were very wet. Some nights he signaled all night. Some nights he was out like a light (probably during a growth spurt, I assumed).

Baby #1 – My Nighttime Potty Break (Somewhere In Months 4-5)

Somewhere in the fourth or fifth month, I stopped doing nighttime EC for about a week. I was tired, my baby was very tired, and I just stuck him in disposables so we could all get some more sleep. I didn't even offer him the potty when I changed his diaper at night! We continued our regular daytime EC routines during this nighttime break. When we both felt better (and after what I thought was a teething/growth spurt combo subsided), we went back into nighttime EC recharged, with much more success than we'd had before!

Baby #1 – My Crawling-Baby Night Pottying Routine (5-8 Months)

When my first son turned about 5 months old, he began Army-crawling, and his nighttime EC needs coincidentally shifted dramatically. At around 6 months, he would stand up when put on on the mini potty

and refuse, vehemently, to sit there and pee, but he wouldn't go back to sleep because he had to pee so badly.

My solution? I started taking him to the bathroom down the hall, every time. I still had a dimmable light on my bedside table, would turn this on low, gently say, "I'm going to take you to potty in the bathroom" to sort of wake him enough to cooperate, would turn on a low light in the bathroom, and would cue him in classic EC position over the sink. Sometimes I quietly sang, sometimes I ran the sink water. Then we'd walk back down the hall, re-diaper, and nurse peacefully back to sleep. This worked like magic.

Baby #1 – My Almost-Walking Baby Night Pottying Routine (8-9 Months)

At 8 months, I trusted my baby's nighttime patterns and let him sleep either naked-bottomed or in his tiny Gerber undies. Sometimes, I'd wake up about 5-10 minutes before he woke (intuition at play). When he woke after I woke, I'd offer him the breast. If he went back to sleep, I did, too. If he wriggled, cried out, shifted his head left and right, or crawled, I knew he had to pee and I'd offer it to him.

I turned on the dim light by the bed, saying to him, "I'm going to take you to the bathroom now." I carried him gently to the bathroom, turned on a dim light there, put him in the classic EC position over the sink, and said "peepee" or "pssss." If he resisted it just a little bit, I'd quietly sing "Twinkle, Twinkle" to him and/or run the water. Then we'd return peacefully to bed, and I'd either leave him naked-bottomed or put his undies back on.

Baby #1 – My Toddler Night Pottying Routine (10-26 Months)

My first baby walked at 9.5 months, shifting our routine in these ways: He protested pottying over the sink at night by crying and arching his back almost every time, sometimes mid-stream!

My solution? Before he got a chance to cry and arch, I nursed him over the sink while cueing him, and he peed while feeding. It took a bit of

acrobatics, but it mostly worked like a charm! At 9.5-16 months, he began to sleep dry for the first 7-9 of 11 hours of his nighttime sleep. He'd then wake to pee two or three times before waking for the day. It seemed like he could hold it great at night while in deep sleep, but not so much in the morning in his light last hours of sleep.

After many wet beds at around the time when walking began, I returned to using a cloth diaper back-up at night, and he began to signal more regularly and stayed drier. During those uncomfortable times of teething and growth spurts, I noticed that he woke up more often and slept a bit lighter, so I gave him homeopathic teething medicine before bed (sometimes throughout the night). This helped his sleep.

At around 17 months, he began to hold it for 9-11 hours (the whole night through at least 5 times a week by 21 months). From 17-21 months, he still wore a wool/hemp back-up at night and would wet it maybe once a week. Without it, he'd pee after an hour of sleep. Ah well. I found that if I nursed him first, he'd pee while still sleeping (over the sink, no cue) right after nursing, without fuss. When he'd sleep the whole night through, I would just take him for his morning pee after snuggling in the morning unless he signaled that he needed to go right away. So, at 21 months, we were basically done with nighttime pottying but were still using a back-up ("night-night pants") and switched to just wool soakers at 22 months, just in case.

At 23 months, if he wriggled a whole bunch throughout the night, I offered. If he refused, we went back to bed. No big deal. He'd even call out a signal at night sometimes. If it was for "poop," I sat him on the mini potty. Otherwise, he still liked being held in-arms. At 24 months, I weaned him, day and night, and moved him into a sporty wooden race car bed - his Big Boy Bed - and continued the night-night pants for another month or two.

Then, as it was winter and he hated using a blanket, I dressed him naked in fleece footed pajamas for nighttime sleep. He peed in those once and then rarely again thereafter. It felt gross, I'd assume, and he just got old enough (and capable enough) to hold it or wake me up to

pee from that age onward. Without the night-night pants, he held it much better from there on out.

Baby #4 – Our Newborn Night Pottying Routine (0-4 Months)

When my fourth baby woke up at any time, day or night, I would potty him on the top hat potty first (pressing his penis downward inside the potty with my finger so I could (a) aim it and (b) know whether he'd gone) and then re-diaper him and side-lay nurse him back to sleep. We co-slept until 4 months old when I moved him into his own crib in his own room, with a baby monitor so I could hear when he woke up.

Our bedside set-up while co-sleeping included a top hat potty, wipes warmer with wet wipes inside it, cloth wipes and bottom balm next to that, a dimmable light on my bedframe, and disposable diapers for his small body (we switched to compostables when they came out, but he typically refused to pee in disposables so we'd re-use the same diaper all night long and most of the day).

Baby #4 – My Mobile Baby Night Pottying Routine (5-12 Months)

After moving him into his own bed, things changed. First, he would sleep through the night more regularly and easily. When I heard him over the audio monitor, I went to him quickly and removed his diaper, checking for wetness as I carried him to the sink (we have a very old farmhouse and installed sinks inside each of the two upstairs bedrooms, which turned out to be great for ECing babies). There was a very dim nightlight next to the sink so I could see what I was doing.

Whether he was wet or dry, I'd offer the potty over the sink. I would press his penis downward so he didn't pee on the mirror or wall, and to indicate that he could go without having to talk or wake him much. If he resisted, I would run some water to relax him. If that didn't work, I would pass his foot through the running water, which would relax him and stimulate a pee if there was one ready to come out. If he beared down, I would grunt to encourage him along, he would poop in the sink

(sorry/not sorry!), and I would clean it up in the morning. This was easiest on my back. Then I would re-diaper him and nurse him back to sleep in the glider rocking chair.

Baby #4 – My Toddler Night Pottying Routine (12-26 Months)

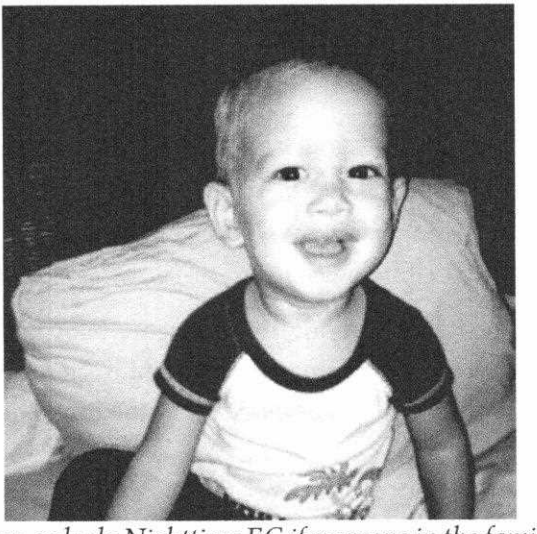
With my fourth baby, I used a disposable diaper back-up at night from walking until about 2 years old, and it typically was dry all night. The disposables we used were Seventh Generation (which stay fairly wet) and I've since switched to Dyper biodegradables, which also feel fairly wet when peed in. The use of these types of disposables at night kept him and my other babies from wanting to pee themselves at night. When he was a young toddler he would wake once or twice a night and we would potty him by sitting him on a mini potty on the floor next to a dim nightlight, letting his sleepy head fall into our lap as we squatted in front of him, saying *pssss* to help him know he could go, listening for pee, asking if he was all done, him shaking his head "yes" and then re-diapering and nursing back to sleep. I weaned him (day and night) at 18 months, so Daddy would put him back to sleep and handled night wake-ups from then on (bless him). We also moved him to a toddler bed around that time.

Near 2 years old he would only wake once to pee. We would either wake up to him screaming because he wet his diaper, or we would do a "dream pee." We typically would go to bed 4 hours after him, at about 11pm, and would offer a "dream pee" so he could relieve himself and then sleep through until the morning. This was always a great idea and helped him to stay dry all night. We tried to remove the night diapers a few times, keeping the "dream pee" as part of our rhythm, but every time he would freely pee the bed, so we kept using the diaper backup until a few months after 2 years old. We ditched the diapers because he kept taking off his diaper at night and peeing wherever he felt like it (his bed, the floor, the diaper if he couldn't get it off). So, we trusted him and integrated the dream pee, and it finally worked. Now, he sleeps in two-piece pajamas "commando" (no underwear, pants only), and if he screams out in the night, Daddy goes up and potties him and puts him back in his bed, quietly, to sleep.

As you can see, there was a great difference between night pottying these two of our five babies, and **the outcomes were very similar**. I hope this helps you see what is possible, not necessarily what to expect. This was our journey, and yours will likely differ. Enjoy your unique experience and know that *it all works out in the end.*

Some Things to Remember

- The goal of night pottying is to increase baby's comfort, so she sleeps better and maintains healthy night hygiene
- Only do Nighttime EC if it helps everyone in the household sleep better
- Good instruction & creative options make nighttime EC less scary
- An easy-access bedside setup of gear helps
- Using cloth diapers or modified disposables may help you complete nighttime dryness sooner, but you can always use biodegradables or disposables if that works best for you
- Nighttime EC can shift from night to night – remain flexible and open
- Nighttime EC helps Daytime EC, and vice versa
- Some babies get better sleep if they are pottied intermittently at night, others don't
- When you're all really tired, get some rest. Nap in the day with baby.
- Read a pre-bed reminder to support night signaling and staying dry (like my *Night Potty* board book)
- Whether you do nighttime EC or not, try using a dream pee when your child is 18-30 months old to help her stay dry at night
- Parenting at night is as important as in the daytime. Be gentle, communicative, and wise about your activities!



And remember, only do Nighttime EC if everyone in the family gets more restful sleep. Otherwise, night dryness usually comes as a natural by-product of daytime dryness.

TAKE A DEEP DIVE: If you are baffled by Nighttime EC and want to learn more deeply about it, please check out my Nighttime EC 101 minicourse in Appendix 4.

DISCOVER MORE: Listen to how to do a dream pee in podcast #94. Learn more about my fifth baby's early nighttime EC success – dry by 16 months old – in podcast #95. See Appendix 3.

PART-TIME EC

EC FOR WORKING PARENTS (& OTHER PART-TIMERS)

Another topic that concerns ECing families is how to continue EC when the parents go back to work...or decide they just want to do EC part-time. This special section is for working parents, those with their babies in part-time care, and families who, although with their baby full-time, choose to EC part-time based on their family lifestyle choices. **Please note that most parents practice part-time EC.** This can look like only catching wake-up pees, only catching poops, or only catching every other pee, etc.

TIPS FOR MAINTAINING A PART-TIME EC PRACTICE

If you have already begun ECing your child and have to return to work outside of the home, are starting EC while already working outside the home, or if you are simply maintaining your EC practice part-time, there are a few routes you can take to help your baby continue this learning while avoiding confusion and interruption.

PRACTICE EC CONSISTENTLY DURING SPECIFIC TIMES

You can simply practice EC when you are at home with your baby, or during specific times that suit your family's lifestyle. These times can include mornings, evenings, nights, and/or weekends.

Besides helping your baby stay sensitive to his awareness of and ability to communicate about elimination, your other goal is to expose your baby to the potty regularly so that it's familiar and comfortable (instead of suddenly introducing it at a much later age).

SHOOT FOR THE EASY CATCHES

If you can potty your baby upon waking, you'll likely catch a pee. Also, pottytunities during diaper changes are pretty reliable. Catching all poops is another great option. Ins and outs are also great transition

pottytunities. (These are what I call The 4 Easy Catches.) See the end of this section for a sample schedule that includes a list of good pottytunities for the working parent or part-time ECer.

Regularly Give Diaper-free Time

Give your baby diaper-free time as often as you are comfortable and able. But remember: do it responsibly. Once you've got the necessary info, use undies, trainers, or just pants during diaper-free time so your baby doesn't get used to peeing on the floor.

For example, after a newborn's morning pottytunity, do naked diaper-free time on a waterproof pad while you prepare breakfast. With a young toddler, do diaper-free time outdoors on a nice day, with or without baby chaps. If you can do a half-hour of diaper-free time (time spent in something other than a diaper) every day, that's recommended. If not, shoot for at least once per week. A little diaper-free time before the evening bath, or after a catch or a miss, is always helpful.

Increase Your Connection at Night

Some working ECers find success at staying in touch with baby's signals and timing needs by co-sleeping. If you co-sleep, you will increase your connection and familiarity with your baby and can physically sense her signals and needs and thus respond more quickly, sending you both back to sleep more quickly. An alternative to this is using a baby monitor, which can pick up the noises your baby makes in her room. Do whatever gives your family the most sleep and allows you to remain more closely and intuitively connected with your baby.

Consider Practicing Nighttime EC

On the note of co-sleeping, you might also consider ramping up your nighttime EC practice in lieu of your daytime. Nighttime EC can be done successfully while co-sleeping or with baby in her own room with a monitor. For some parents, nighttime EC is exhausting. For others (myself included), pottying at night can help everyone get more sleep because baby is more comfortable (having an empty bladder). It just depends.

Doing nighttime EC can positively influence your effort at daytime EC. It can also prevent bedwetting in later years. Refer to the section on Nighttime EC to learn more.

Wear Your Baby More Often

When you aren't home, skip the stroller and babywear. Around the home and yard, consider using a baby carrier. As with co-sleeping, being physically closer to your baby by wearing her attunes you to her signals and natural timing around pottying (and many other things!). It also deepens your connection during the precious moments you spend together when you're not at work.

Babies must discharge pent-up energy they generate throughout the day, and the best way to help them do this (and produce a happier, more serene baby) is by babywearing. This not only deepens your intuition and results around EC, but it also helps you both feel happier & more connected.

Use Cloth Diapers (or Modified Disposables) at Least Part-time

If you cannot do EC full-time (whether you are away at work or simply choosing to EC part-time), try switching to cloth diapers at least part-

time. You can use a cover with a prefold laid in it, or sumo-style with a diaper belt. By using cloth, you can more immediately know when your baby is wet, and either offer a pottytunity to see if there's more or simply change the diaper. You will stay in better touch with your baby's Natural Timing if you know immediately when she's wet, and her Signals (as they evolve) will also remain clearer and more consistent.

Using cloth will also help your baby remain sensitive to feeling wet and will help you stay alert to baby's potty needs while you're home with him. And we want him to stay accustomed to dryness, so, if you can, change the diaper as often as possible.

Disposable diapers alone will not help you achieve these goals, however, there is a way to modify their use by adding a cut-up piece of a washcloth (see How to Diaper with EC for how to do both the cloth sumo-style & the disposable modification).

Caregivers & EC

If you must hire a caregiver (such as a nanny) or bring your child to daycare while you work (or do other things), try to find a caregiver who will participate with ECing your child to some extent.

During your initial interview, ask your caregiver if s/he has had any experience with EC. Many caregivers who are natives of other countries have been exposed to some form of "baby pottying" in their homeland's culture but may not apply this to your baby unless you ask. If you are interviewing a foreign native, inquire about the potty learning activities used in their homeland. You may be surprised at what you discover!

If you are interviewing someone who isn't familiar with EC, ask if s/he would be willing to learn EC and help your baby go when she signals. Download, print, and fill out my special guide entitled **EC Guide for Caregivers** and give it to your caregiver (available on the Book Owners Website – see Appendix 2).

This guide will show your caregiver how to cue, your baby's signals, and her preferred positions. Request s/he read it. Demonstrate for him/her how you EC your baby. Mention the 4 Easy Catches. Most importantly (and this is explained in the Caregiver download), set the expectations *low* to take the pressure off your caregiver. Their stress may rub off on your baby if they feel pressure, and that can negatively affect potty time. Just knowing that your baby sometimes cries to go potty will help the caregiver have an easier time caring for your child.

DAYCARES & EC

Daycares may be cooperative if your baby is already poop trained. Sending baby in a cloth diaper backup (or Tiny Trainers covered by a TinyUps cloth pull-up cover, with several spares in a wet/dry bag) is often acceptable by daycares that allow cloth diapered children. Obviously this will require conversations and coordination, but it is worth a shot. Perhaps your daycare attendant could offer your baby a pottytunity when the toddlers and other young children take a potty break.

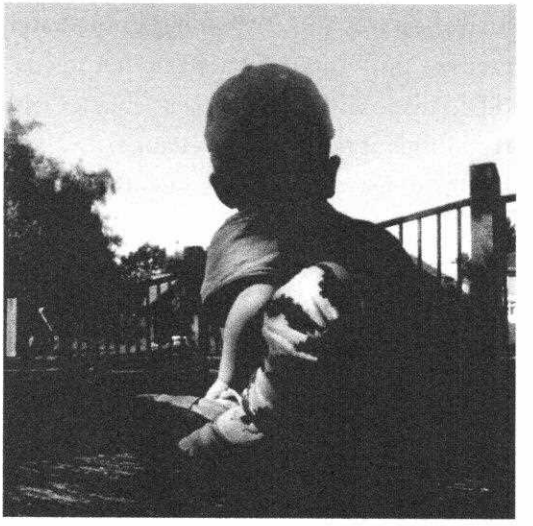
If daycare is not cooperative, no worries. You can ask them to change your baby's diaper every hour, on the hour, so she'll stay drier (download **A Letter to the Daycare** and give it to the supervising attendant - available on the Book Owners Website, see Appendix 2).

DISCOVER MORE: I've created two additional guides to help you transition to diaper-free at Preschool/Daycare (one for you and one for the teacher). Download them at the Book Owners Website – see Appendix 2.

BE ENCOURAGED: Learn how elementary school teacher Andrea had amazing success doing EC super-part-time while her daughter was in full-time daycare on podcast episode #82.5. See Appendix 4.

If You Are Unable to Find an EC-willing Caregiver:

1. Do your best to keep your child's sensitivity alive during the times you are with him by following the advice above.
2. Ask your caregiver to change your baby's wet diapers OFTEN. You can mention that you've had problems with diaper rash in the past, and the best way to avoid it is to change her every hour (or any time increment of your choice).
3. Request the daycare attendant bring your baby to the potty when other older children are given a potty break. Show him/her how to potty your baby with what equipment they've got.
4. Give the daycare attendant a letter (A Letter to the Daycare) to help you request #2 & #3 in a more formal way.
5. Re-approach the subject with your caregiver later and see if s/he has become open to it (especially if the baby regularly gets fussy when she wants to pee, and the caregiver wants her to be less fussy while in his/her care!).
6. Rest easy that many babies quickly learn that their parent will potty them when they drop them off/pick them up, but the caregiver will not, and it doesn't confuse them.
7. Follow the example below to give your baby a prime number of pottytunities before and after dropping him off for care.



EXAMPLE: "A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A WORKING EC PARENT"

Here's an illustration of how and when to potty your baby before and after work, taking advantage of various Pottytunities (based on both your baby's Natural Timing and Transition Times). Choose whichever ideas appeal to you.

1. Offer a pottytunity immediately upon waking first thing in the morning, and thereafter as frequently as you think your baby might have to potty until you have to go to work. (Observe during diaper-free time on weekends to learn how often your baby usually has to go in the mornings.)
2. Before leaving for daycare, offer a pottytunity.
3. At daycare, when you drop your baby off, offer a final pottytunity inside (bring a potty with you or use their toilet or sink). You can mention to your baby that she may have to pee in her diaper during the day, but that Mommy/Daddy has asked the attendant to change her often.
4. When you pick baby up from daycare, offer a pottytunity while you're inside.
5. When you get out of the car at home, offer a pottytunity.
6. Put her in a cloth diaper held in place with a diaper belt or elastic band once you get home (or use tiny underwear or training pants).

Notice when she's wet and change her immediately. If/when she signals, offer her pottytunities based on her needs. (You can also use a modified disposable – see How to Diaper with EC).

7. Offer pottytunities at every diaper change.
8. Offer when you see a poop face (gently say "wait" and catch some or all the poop in the potty).
9. Offer at least 1/2 hour of diaper-free time before her evening bath or after dinner. If she begins to pee on the floor without signaling (and is a mobile baby), softly, gently transport her to the potty and say, "pee in the potty." If she's younger and this happens, just cue with her. The key here is for baby to loosen her dependence upon diapers via diaper-free time. Remember, this includes time spent in underwear, trainers, or just pants. Diaper-free time (at least once per week) is essential. If she signals, take her to the proper place and mention, "You went peepee in the potty/sink/bathroom. That's where peepee goes." Or say nothing! And remember, do diaper-free time responsibly.
10. Offer a final pottytunity prior to going to bed.
11. On the weekends, offer pottytunities upon waking from naps, and strive to catch all poops.
12. If you are up for it, learn how to potty at night. See the section on Nighttime EC for more.
13. Keep baby in EC-friendly clothing during the times you choose to EC (see the Supply List).

As you can see by this example, it is possible to do a lot of EC if you practice it part-time or if you must return to work.

RESOURCE REMINDER: I mentioned this a few pages ago, but I will share it again here because it's important! I've created two additional guides to help you transition to diaper-free at Preschool/Daycare (one for you and one for the teacher). Please download them at the Book Owners Website – see Appendix 2.

DIAPERS + DIAPER-FREE TIME

INTRODUCTION

This section contains everything regarding using diapers as a back-up, without teaching your baby to pee on the floor.

The main areas of focus are three:

1. How to Diaper with EC
2. Do I Have to Do Away with Diapers?
3. Doing Regular Diaper-free Time, Responsibly

Pretty much everything you'll ever need to know about using diapers as tools in your EC practice will be covered in this section.

HOW TO DIAPER WITH EC

If you want to EC with a diaper back-up, this section demystifies simple cloth diapering options & EC-friendly disposable diapering options.

Like many moms, I was baffled by cloth diapers initially. I really wanted to use them because I believed that keeping my baby in cloth would encourage him out of diapers sooner (plus, I felt guilty landfilling disposables!!).

But I couldn't get them to fit correctly on my little newborn boy. I watched video after video and tried so hard but ended up pausing my cloth diaper service & using disposables as a back-up until I could figure it all out!

Since then, I've used both cloth & disposables, in many ways, throughout our EC journey with 5 babies. With baby #5, I used Tiny Trainers 50% of my back-up time and biodegradable disposable diapers the other 50%.

What have I learned? First, there is not much to fear around cloth diapering; you can do it with very little expense or expertise. I also learned that choosing disposables will not destroy your EC practice if you use them responsibly, and now that we have a wonderful biodegradable option, we can diaper even more responsibly. Last, I learned to use what you have. There is no reason to delay starting EC because you don't have the "correct" diaper or don't know how to use them.

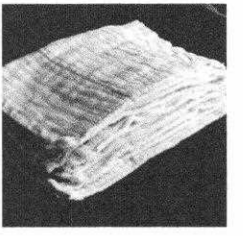
In this section, I equip you with 5 ways to diaper your baby for easy & inexpensive ECing. You will learn:

- basic cloth diapering vocabulary
- 2 methods of cloth diapering, simplified for EC
- how to pre-wash & wash cloth diapers at home, and
- 3 disposable diaper options: 1) with an insert to maintain sensitivity, and 2) without getting baby used to wetness or getting diaper rash – both preferably with compostables.

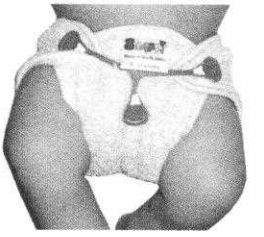
Let's get started!

Cloth Diapering Vocabulary

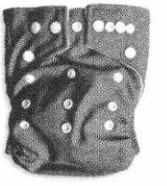
Remember that all the items you might possibly need to diaper with EC are in the Supply List toward the end of this book. Here's a list of general cloth diapering vocab!



Prefold - a cloth diaper with a thicker center area and two thinner outer areas. Usually made of 100% cotton, some are made of uber-absorbent hemp or a combination of these and other fibers. Prefolds come in various sizes based on age & weight. However, they can be used more creatively than prescribed. AKA "Trifold," "Diaper," "Cloth Diaper"

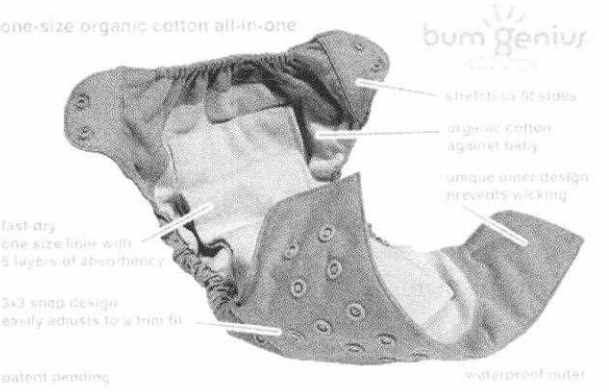


Snappi - a safer mechanism for holding a prefold together without having to use a diaper pin. They hold a prefold in place on your baby (then you top that with a cover, or not). However, I don't recommend these for EC use, as they become an obstacle.



Diaper Cover - a water-resistant outer cover that helps contain pee and poop when the prefold becomes soiled. The cover usually wraps around the prefold/snappi combo, but I use it just over a folded prefold in the Quick EC Diaper method below. Made of wool, cotton, polyester, or a blend, with or without a plastic inner liner. AKA "Diaper Shell"

Diaper Belt - an elasticized band wrapped in a moisture-resistant cloth outer covering (such as wool or fleece) which holds a prefold in place, Sumo Wrestler style. The belt stays on the baby's waist between changes. AKA "Prefold Belt."


one-size organic cotton all-in-one
bum genius
stretch to fit sides
organic cotton against baby
unique liner design prevents wicking
fast dry one size liner with 5 layers of absorbency
3x3 snap design easily adjusts for a trim fit
patent pending
waterproof outer

Cloth Diapering System or AIO - AKA "All In One Diaper," a cloth diapering 'system' that can be conveniently & easily used, laundered, and understood. You don't need to invest in an AIO system for EC, although many people do and love them. You might use the covers (or "shells") alone, as per the Quick EC Diaper method, below. I've never bought the "kits," just the covers.

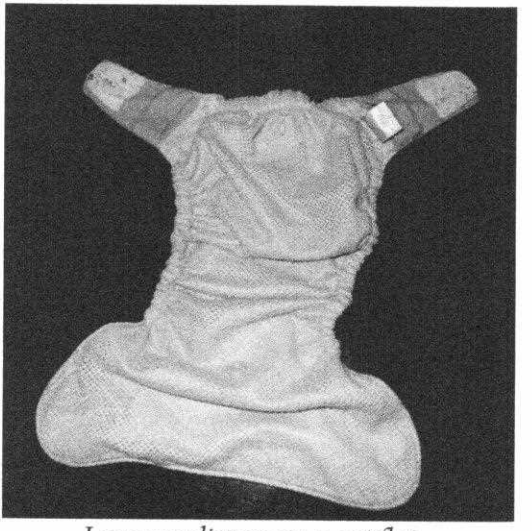
2 Cloth Diapering Methods

Cloth diapering need not be complex or expensive. Try these two quick and inexpensive methods:

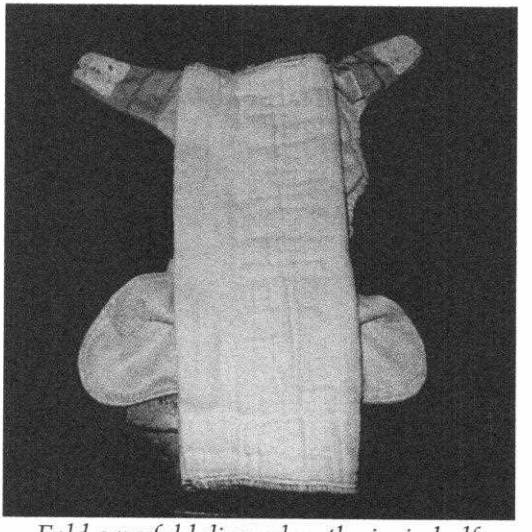
1) Quick EC Diaper

I developed this method based on what I had on-hand and my need to have a simple diaper-back-up system. Basically, the Quick EC Diaper is a folded-over cloth prefold in a diaper cover. The diaper cover keeps the prefold in place and keeps a big miss contained better than method #2, below, due to snug leg gussets in the covers.

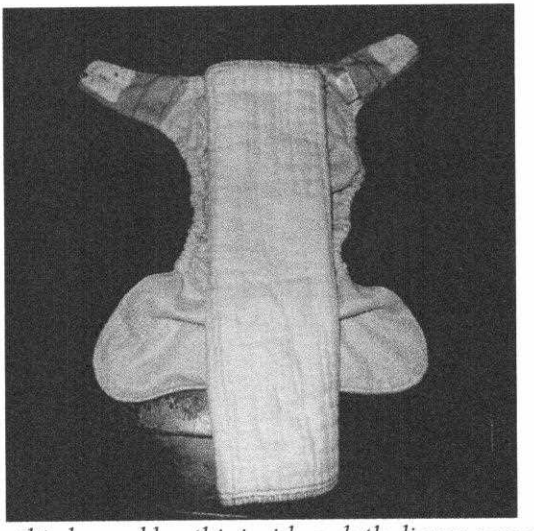
The Quick EC Diaper, Step-by-Step
A Daytime Example
(Grovia Cover w/100% Cotton Prefold)



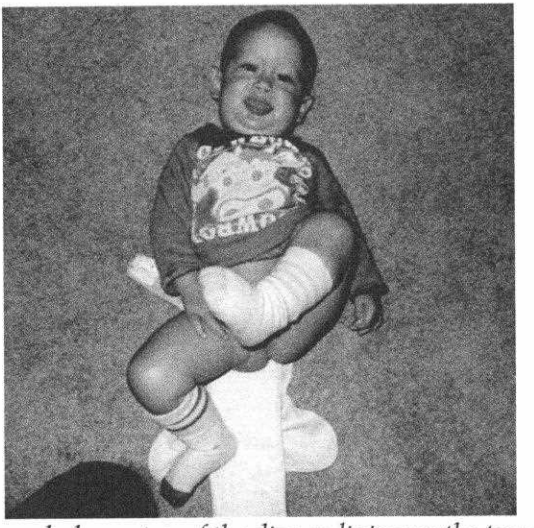
Lay your diaper cover out flat...



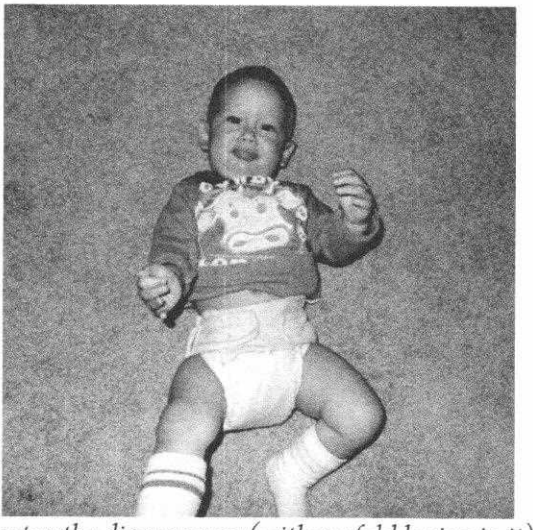
Fold a prefold diaper lengthwise in half,



or thirds...and lay this inside a cloth diaper cover.
Line up the top of the folded prefold with the top of the back of the cover.
Do not pin, clip, nor secure the cloth diaper onto baby with a Snappi...
simply lay it in the cover.

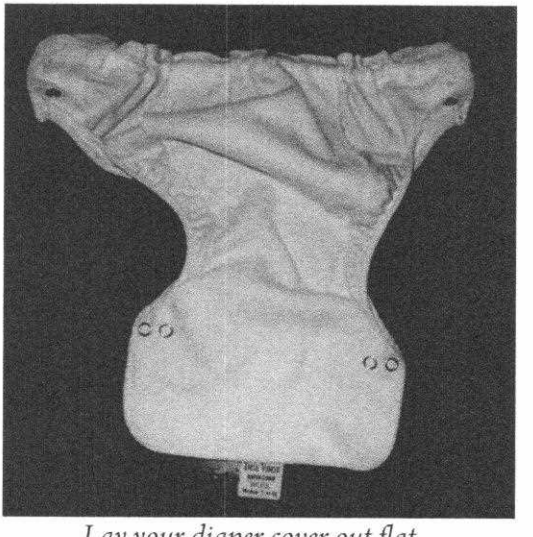


Lay your baby on top of the diaper, lining up the top seam
of the back of the diaper to belly-button-height.



Fasten the diaper cover (with prefold laying in it) on your baby & you're done.

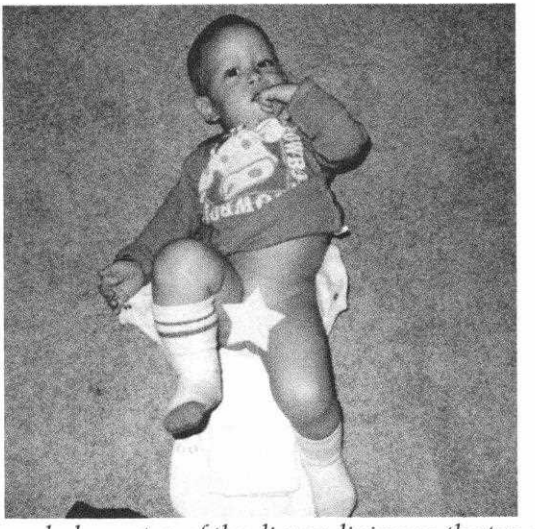
The Quick EC Diaper, Step-by-Step
A Nighttime Example
(Imse Vimse Wool Cover w/Hemp/Cotton Prefold)



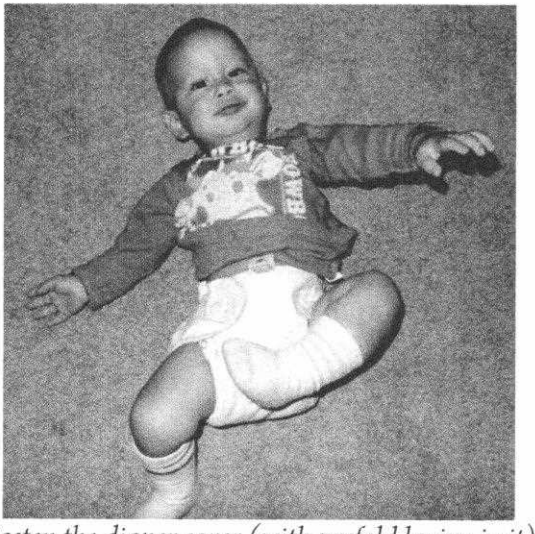
Lay your diaper cover out flat...

Fold your hemp/cotton prefold diaper lengthwise in thirds... and lay this inside a cloth diaper cover. Line up the top of the folded prefold with the top of the back of the cover.

Do not pin, clip, nor secure the cloth diaper onto baby with a Snappi... simply lay it in the cover.



Lay your baby on top of the diaper, lining up the top seam of the back of the diaper to belly-button-height.



Fasten the diaper cover (with prefold laying in it) on your baby & you're done.

Materials: For daytime, use a cotton prefold in a cloth diaper cover of your choice. For nighttime use the same, OR, if you're finding you need more absorbency, day or night, use a hemp/cotton blend prefold in a wool diaper cover to minimize leaks, or a hemp/cotton blend prefold in a cotton diaper cover if your baby doesn't need as much protection.

Don't want to spend time figuring out which covers & prefolds to buy? See the Supply List for my simple recommendations of what you'll need to diaper in this way.

Sizing: Use a prefold size that lays in the diaper cover exactly and doesn't stick out the end, either direction, once affixed to your baby. For this, newborn-sized prefolds work for a VERY long time on most babies. Upgrade if you ever find it necessary. We've used newborn-sized prefolds for 11 months straight in this manner, with a diaper cover that grows with the baby.

Start-up Costs:

Day
$1.50 x 20 cotton prefolds = $30*
4 cloth diaper covers x $17 = $68

Night
$7 x 6 hemp/cotton prefolds = $42
1 wool diaper cover x $30 = $30
Total Cost = $170

**with a newborn, I recommend buying 40 prefolds to start (add $30 to total), or just using a diaper service for the first 2 months.*

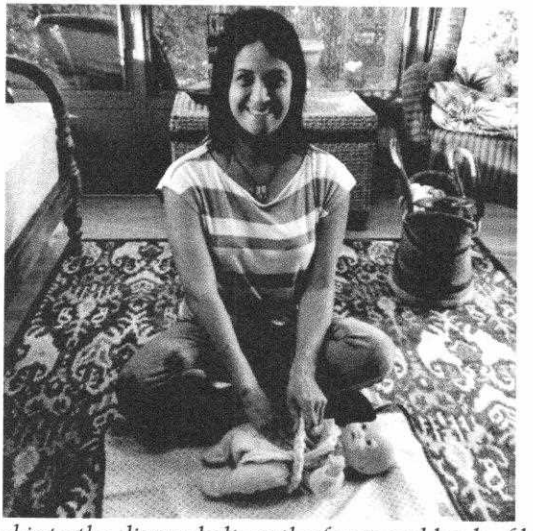
Considering most cloth diapering systems cost upwards of $300-400, this method can save you some money.

Did you know?
Most Americans spend an average of **$3,000** on disposable diapers over the diaper-wearing years (an average of 3 years)! Our family has saved over $10,000 by ECing our 5 babies.

2) Sumo-Style Diaper
For a super-simple diaper-back-up method, use a diaper belt, AKA prefold belt, holding a prefold diaper (or a burp cloth, muslin, or flour sack) in place. Use this method to instantly tell when your baby is wet, especially when figuring out Natural Timing during observation time with a mobile baby or young toddler. Sumo-style is also useful if you're not able to do naked diaper-free time, or during the night if you want a simple diaper changing option and you're co-sleeping over a natural waterproof layer.

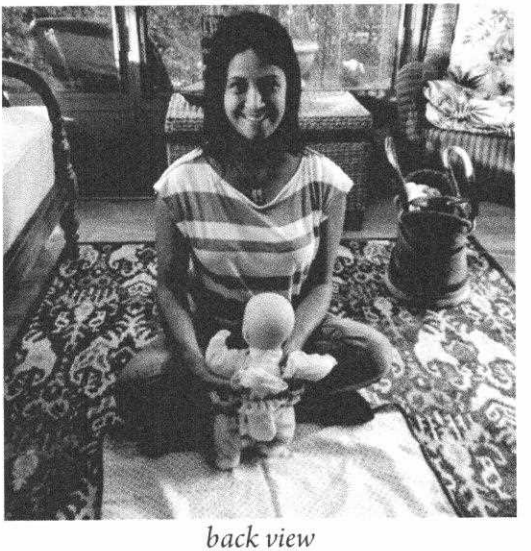
Sumo-style Diaper, Step-by-Step
(w/Cotton Prefold)

Place the diaper belt on the baby's waist. Fold a prefold cloth diaper (or a burp cloth if you want something thinner) in half or thirds and place between baby's legs.



Pull either end into the diaper belt on the front and back of baby's waist, holding the diaper into place with a bit hanging out of each side.

front view



back view

Then you can easily pull the diaper off the baby while leaving the diaper belt on her waist!

Materials: In general, use 100% cotton prefolds or use burp cloths for less absorbency and more immediate detection of wetness. You can also use the more absorbent hemp/cotton prefolds at night if you need

an extra boost. Get (or make) a diaper belt made of water-repellent material, such as wool, cotton flannel, or fleece.

Sizing: As opposed to the Quick EC Diaper method, for the Sumo-style, you'll want the prefold to stick out of the ends of the diaper belt. This keeps it in place. For newborns, use newborn-sized prefolds. For larger babies, use infant or toddler-sized (depending on your baby's size), so the prefold will fit around your baby and through the belt (front and back).

Start-up Costs:

Day
1 diaper belt = $8
$1.50 x 20 cotton prefolds = $30*

Night
$7 x 6 hemp/cotton prefolds = $42
Total Cost = $80

**with a newborn, I recommend buying 40 prefolds to start (add $30 to total), or just using a diaper service for the first 2 months.*

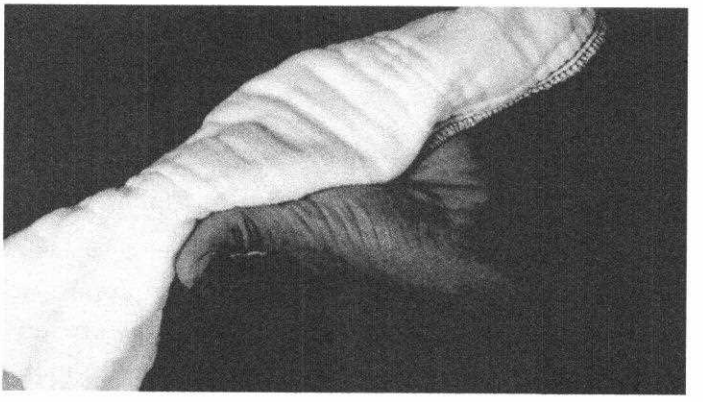
The sumo-style method of back-up diapering can also save a tremendous amount of money compared to the cost of most cloth diapering systems ($300-400).

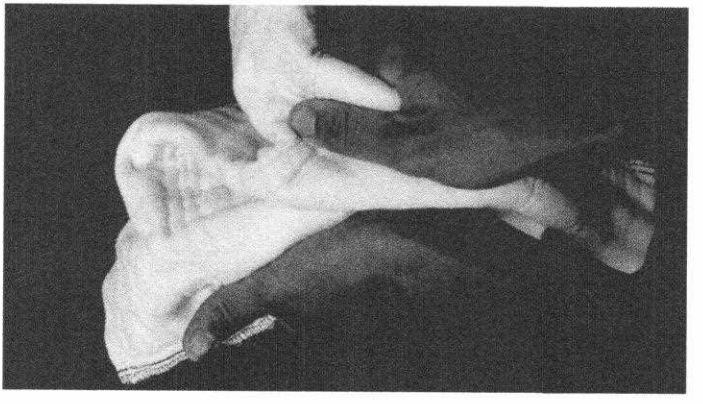
HOW TO PRE-WASH & WASH CLOTH DIAPERS AT HOME

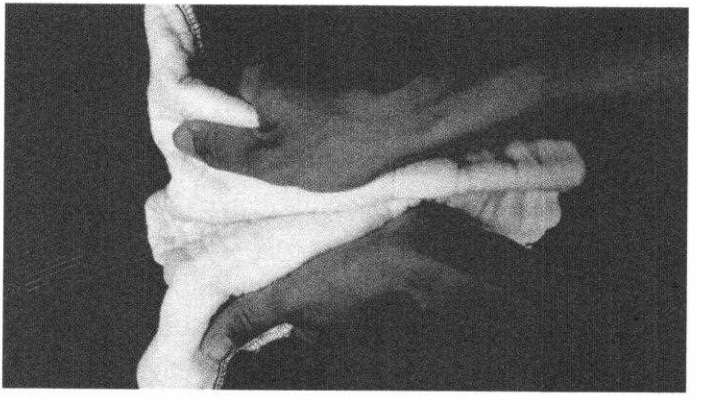
With a peed-in diaper, just throw it in the wash. You could also rinse with warm water and hang dry to use a few times prior to laundering. When you have a **poopy cloth diaper** to contend with (which isn't usual, but *does* happen), you'll want to learn how to pre-wash & wash the dirties. Fun story: I learned how to do this in Ghana, West Africa, back in 2000. One day I had to wash my bedding and clothes by hand, with two buckets and some soap, on the beach, in the hot sun for the

first time in my 21 years of life. The local women and girls laughed hysterically at my first attempts until, luckily for me, one woman stepped in to show me how to do it (and do it thoroughly). I am indebted (and humbled!) to this day for her guidance. Here's how to pre-wash your dirty cloth diapers, by hand, in the sink, preparing them for the wash:

1. Get the poop off the prefold. I try to get the poop into the toilet. If it's breastmilk-only poop, it can go down the sink. If it's solid, I wipe it off with a piece of toilet paper or try to gently shake it off. Solid poop is actually kind of easy to get into the toilet. Liquid poop? Go for the sink. If you have a bidet, use it to spray the poop off. You can find some DIY bidet solutions for cloth diapering by searching online, but to keep it simple, I just wipe or shake into the toilet.
2. Run warm or hot water over the whole prefold.
3. Squirt some hand soap (or any type of soap or laundry detergent) onto the prefold where the mess is. You may have to squirt a few areas.
4. Hold the prefold in your left hand and use your right hand to rub the prefold against itself, using the heel of your left hand as the 'scrubbing board.' Scrub together until the stain mostly comes out, adding more soap when necessary.
5. Rinse the soap out of the prefold with more water, wring out, and hang it or place it in a wet/dry bag (for later laundering).
6. Do the same with your diaper cover: dump any solids, get it wet, squirt on some hand soap, scrub, rinse, and hang it or place it in a wet/dry bag (for later laundering).
7. Throw both prefold and diaper cover (and the wet/dry bag if you used one) into the laundry at any point thereafter.
8. I recommend washing any baby clothing, including diapers, in a natural laundry detergent, such as Seventh Generation's Free & Clear. This reduces the chance of diaper rash.







Consider Hiring a Cloth Diaper Service

To ease my anxiety of having a new baby with tons of new responsibilities, I asked a relative to gift me with a cloth diaper service for the first

two months. I skipped the wash-them-myself stage and learn to use cloth the way I wanted to.

3 Disposable Diaper Options

Use what you have! You can absolutely do EC with disposable diapers – just try to use the ones that still feel wet when they're peed in, such as Seventh Generation or Dyper compostables. I used disposable for the first two months with my first baby as I unraveled the mystery of how to use cloth diapers, and occasionally over the first five months with him (such as while traveling or driving long distances). With later babies, I found they signalled best in disposables and often refused to pee in them. It was always a game to see how long we could use "this one dry disposable diaper" throughout a day. Re-use disposables so long as they are dry. And use compostable, biodegradable ones if you can find 'em (see Appendix 1).

And don't feel guilty. That won't help. Remember, you will use fewer diapers, overall, than you would if you didn't do EC (12-18 months of diapers vs. 3-4 years of them), and if you can't make it work with cloth diapers, you need another option. I want you to *DO* EC, and I don't want *"can't figure out cloth diapering"* to be a reason for you to fail.

So, here's how to use disposables "responsibly" for optimum EC results:

1) Add A Cloth Insert

If you want to continue to use disposable diapers but want your baby to remain sensitive to wetness, get some old washcloths, cut them into thirds, and drop one of the strips into the disposable diaper. If they've been wetted, you can wash and re-use the strips. If they've been pooped in you can throw them away with the disposable diaper. The cloth insert gives some feedback to the child but doesn't involve the overwhelm of switching to cloth diapers.

Buy used washcloths at the thrift store or request free ones by posting a listing on Craigslist.

2) Change Diaper Frequently

If you want to use disposables but want to make them EC-friendly, change your baby frequently and offer pottytunities upon each changing. You will likely find that the diaper is still dry. See how long you can use "this one dry disposable diaper." Make it a game. Resist the implied "convenience" of disposable diapers and don't let them serve as a wearable toilet, as the only option. Do not let your baby sit in a wet diaper for too long, even though the diaper commercials will try to convince you to leave them in the same diaper for 8-12 hours (!). We want baby to stay dry, stay attuned to her potty needs, and to avoid diaper rash.

Speaking of, always dry baby's skin with a soft cloth after using a wet-wipe to avoid diaper rash, and apply baby balm to any red areas to help keep everything tip-top down there.

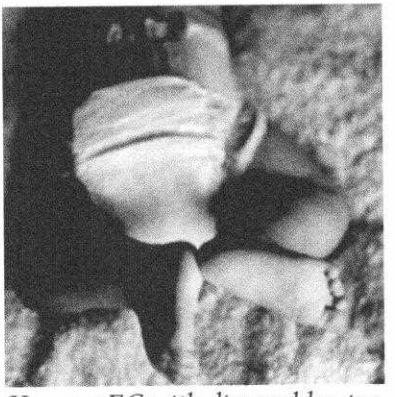
3) Use a Biodegradable Disposable Diaper

Upon this printing, an amazing thing has recently happened to the diaper market: Dyper. These super-soft, plain, simple, compostable diapers can biodegrade in 75 days (versus the estimated 500+ years for all other disposable diaper brands, including my former favorite, Seventh Generation). Even if you don't technically compost them in your backyard garden, this is a HUGE improvement over regular disposable diapers – because disposable diapers are one of the only

items in landfills that waste management professionals can NOT figure out how to recycle, break down, re-use, or make go away. This is a huge thing!

Dyper currently comes as a subscription (see Appendix 1). They have a strip that turns from yellow to blue when baby is wet, which can help you learn baby's Natural Timing. Our fifth baby signaled well wearing them because she didn't like to pee in them AT ALL (they feel wet). We want your baby to feel wet, not wear a super-wicking disposable diaper (that will never biodegrade, ahem). Dyper is a fantastic option to use as your diaper backup for EC – all the time or just part of the time.

If you choose one of the 3 disposable diapering methods above, please do not feel guilty or feel like an EC fraud. Remember, you will typically use diapers for 1/3 to 1/2 of the average total time (12-18 months versus 3-4 years). This means that choosing a disposable back-up is absolutely a *much better choice* than doing no EC at all, and now there's a way to do it without having such a devastating impact on the environment.



You can EC with disposables, too (just choose biodegradables if you can swing it).

DO I HAVE TO DO AWAY WITH DIAPERS?

When you start EC, the diaper becomes a "back-up," no longer a full-time toilet. That is a complete paradigm shift, for sure. It becomes a tool that is a useful back-up for when you guys miss each other, when you miss baby's signals, when you're busy, when baby is not in your care, or when you're choosing not to do EC (like at night or on outings).

So what about the thought that going "diaper-free" means *I can't use diapers at all anymore or I'll be a fraud?* Well, the phrase *diaper-free* actually means "free from an exclusive reliance on diapers." It does not imply that you must do EC *without* diapers, although some do. Most folks do EC with a diaper back-up until the child has begun walking and the baton can be passed.

Parents do EC within a wide spectrum of diaper usage – from none to all the way! Here is a visual to help you see the array of options you can choose from – or create your own.

THE CONTINUUM OF DIAPER AND NON-DIAPER BACKUPS FOR EC

bare bum
chaps (with or without cover)
split-crotch pants
commando (pants only)
tiny underwear
cotton training pants
sumo-style (diaper belt + prefold)
cloth pull up cover solo or w/undies/trainers
quick EC diaper (folded prefold + cover)
cloth diaper with Snappi + cover
all-in-one (AIO) cloth diaper system
compostable diaper
disposable diaper with cloth insert
disposable diaper

DISCOVER MORE: Read my blog post on back-up options by age and stage: "The Ultimate Guide to EC Backups." Also, all the above items are listed on my Supply List – see Appendix 1.

Using The Back-Up as a "Tool"

Something that might help you choose which method to select is the idea that the diaper, training pants, or underwear should be seen and used as a "tool." Again, it is no longer a full-time, wearable toilet. It is now a tool, a backup for when you guys "miss" each other, when you have a "miss," or when you're not doing EC by choice (or busy-ness).

This tool will ideally keep misses and messes contained while your baby learns and matures, will help you do EC without stress, will aid you with easy ons and offs, and will encourage your baby to signal the most. Choose your tool wisely and be flexible as you and your baby's needs evolve.

Key Point: The best "back-up" is the one that creates the least stress, the most catches, and the most baby signals! See that blog post above for more info. It will likely answer every single question about transitioning from diapers to trainers to undies, and when.

When to Ditch the Diapers

You'll someday decide to stop using diapers altogether. For those in Western countries, the best timing is usually around the stage when the baby masters walking (sometimes before, sometimes after). Baby can be pre-verbal and does not have to signal for every potty request to be taken out of diapers; there are many ways to work as a team with EC once the diapers are out of the picture.

While lots of folks start doing away with diapers when their babies have mastered walking, others ditch them when their babies *resist* diapers more often than not, seem *too comfortable* wearing (and peeing in) them, or even begin to *prefer other things like underwear*. This can begin around pre-walking or 9 months. Usually, between 12-16 months, most ECing parents have permanently ditched awake-time diapers.

As an example, I'll share what we did. I took my first baby out of diapers at 9 months, and it was a lot of laundry for a few months, but I was tired of the diaper-changing wars. I took my other 4 babies out of diapers at 13 months, 17 months (a mistake because he started to like wearing them), 12 months, and 13 months. I never felt completely ready to stop using diapers because EC was never perfect at that age, but after my children began walking we did it anyway, and it was a huge success every time.

The "sensitive period" for starting and finishing toilet learning in Montessori thinking is 12-18 months, so ditching awake-time, at-home diapers during this time is highly recommended (and it is what people did as recently as the 1950s in the United States – in 1957, 92% of children were toilet independent by 18 months old. *NY Times 1999*). It is ultimately up to the parents to decide, but from our EC community's collective experience, "around walking" is a reliable marker.

When you do ditch 'em, you can use training pants if *you* need extra protection for some reason (like the new carpet, or your nerves, or preschool, or your MIL's upcoming visit). Or, you can move directly to underwear or commando (pants only). Some parents find success with this because it's an actual "shift" from diapers to absolutely-not-diapers.

Some examples: With my first, we went from diapers to thin cotton training pants at 9 months to undies at 15 months, which was great for us because of the carpet! With my second, we went from disposables to cloth at 8 months, to Tiny Undies at 13 months, and she was telling us every single time by 15 months. With my fifth, we went from compostables to Tiny Trainers at 13 months, and at 14 months, she was 100% reliable when we switched to Tiny Undies. Remember – pick your best "tool" for your unique child, and trust them to rise to the occasion.

You can ditch diapers any time, and in any way that works for you. (And you can experiment with what sort of clothing/back-up you'd like to move into.) Just don't ditch them to gain "supremo EC status" or

something! It's not a contest. Cultivate a good level of confidence and a great connection with your baby's potty needs, and then go for it.

You might also choose to *partially* ditch diapers, such as only using diapers on outings, only while at Grandma's house, or only as a tool during a re-set. It need not be all-day-or-nothing, but when you do stop using diapers, please *quit cold turkey during the times you are stopping.* It sends a very clear message to your baby and helps you stay the course.

As for nighttime and naps, you may continue using diapers as a back-up for longer than daytime (most parents do). Using a cloth nighttime back-up is a good idea if your babe communicates better in cloth. I used one with my first son for 24 months and 99% of the time it was dry in the morning (but I did potty him several times a night). You can also use a disposable at night if *that* helps baby sleep better. Choose biodegradable where possible. I used disposables and biodegradables at night with babies #2-5 and often they would come up dry at very early ages, so I re-used them night after night. My fifth only used biodegradables at night and she was dry all night by 16 months, with no pottying. I hope this illustrates it truly doesn't matter what you choose for sleep-time back-ups. Use whatever back-up works for you – there is no right or wrong answer.

Know that most kiddos naturally become dry at night after daytime dryness becomes regular. Use the sleepy-time back-up until it keeps coming up dry, or until you feel like it's time to ditch the dipes the whole 24/7. (At that point you can night train, which is covered in my other book on potty training, or start doing a dream pee each night, which is covered in the Nighttime section.)

Overall, parents who ditch the at-home, awake-time diapers *around the time when their young toddler masters walking* have experienced the most long-term success with wrapping up EC and teaching life-long positive potty habits.

Using The Diaper During a Re-Set

You may get to the end of your rope and need a way to "re-set" your EC practice to get your kiddo to start signaling again, to stop the potty-centered tone that's gone rampant in the house, to get a sanity-saving break, to end a potty pause or resistant spell, or to focus on other things. Re-setting can be amazing for you both.

Remember: Using a diaper as a "tool" differs from just diapering her up and not communicating about it anymore! During a re-set, the diaper is still a "back-up," not a toilet.

To do a re-set by re-diapering for a short period, mark your calendar for 2 weeks and use a diaper back-up as a "re-set," 24/7. First, tell your kiddo you're using diapers again for 2 weeks because he's still learning, and that you want him to tell you when he needs to go. He'll understand.

If she signals strongly, or you see the nonverbal signals clearly, or if you usually catch poops with no resistance, go ahead and potty your baby (silently) but do not make potty time the focus of your day. (It should never be the focus of your day, anyway!)

As you further let go, you will all relax, things will shift, and the diaper-as-tool thing will finally make sense. Just keep it to simple communication when you do a re-set. Brief phrases. (And swallow your pride. Again, this is not about being the first Mom or Dad on the block whose infant is out of diapers.)

PS – I did a nighttime re-set at 13 months with my first baby, and it was tremendously helpful.

Doing Regular Diaper-free Time, *Responsibly*

I added this section because recent trends show that overdoing naked diaper-free time can actually hinder the EC process, teaching a child to pee on the floor. Read on.

The Bottom Line

IF your baby signals best *while naked,* including taking herself to the potty on her own, and you have no peeing-on-the-floor problem, then do naked time as much as you want!
If your baby *doesn't signal* while naked, and there is pee everywhere, then you're better off limiting naked time.

The Importance Of Diaper-free Time

Diapers are commonly used as a back-up during the pre-walking months of EC, but it's also good to incorporate regular diaper-free time into your baby's routine at this time. We'll cover why below. A half-hour per day is common, and before bathtime or after a miss or catch is popular. The most important thing here is to do any naked diaper-free time *responsibly*. Here's how.

Deciding Whether to Continue Offering Diaper-free Time

Once naked or modified diaper-free observation time *has served its purpose* – to inform you of your baby's signals and natural timing, and to inform your baby of what her own elimination feels like, which is what the whole "Part 1, Step 1" was all about – you can decide whether you want to keep doing regular diaper-free time or not, naked or not.

To be clear, "diaper-free time" can be done *naked-bottomed* or it can simply be time spent *without diapers,* including regular clothing, undies, cloth trainers. So let's first decide whether we want to do diaper-free time naked or not.

When *Naked* Time Becomes Counter-Productive

When naked, no one needs to signal, now do they?! **Naked** diaper-free time can become counter-productive if:

- you already know baby's signals
- you already know baby's current natural timing
- your baby is already aware of what's going on down there
- and your baby is peeing freely on whatever surface she's on, while naked.

If you've got all this going for ya, naked observation time may have already served its purpose and begins to be counterproductive. Overdo naked time beyond this, and you could essentially teach him to pee on the floor (depending on how you handle things). When you think about it, letting baby pee wherever, whenever, when naked is not much different than letting baby pee wherever, whenever, in a diaper all the time. Too much naked time without communication or action or boundaries will result in teaching "pee wherever."

If this is you, it could be time to add in some 'resistance' (think: opposite poles of a magnet): **clothing**. Since soiling his clothing will eventually not feel socially/physically/emotionally cool, *wearing clothing* can become your new "diaper-free time." Remember, "diaper-free" means free from exclusive dependence upon diapers. It doesn't mean having a naked baby or toddler running around peeing all over your floor 24/7.

Once naked observation time becomes unnecessary (and you've become more knowledgeable), you'll want to know how to continue regular diaper-free and/or naked time responsibly. First let's state the obvious.

How To Continue Diaper-free Time, *with Clothing*

Pick a time of day and a desired location to do some time with underwear or just pants (commando) as your "back-up." Cotton training pants (like Tiny Trainers) are also a fine option if your baby doesn't treat them like a diaper. Increase this non-diaper time over the weeks, and before you know it you will be done with dipes. Now, let's continue speaking about whether and how to keep doing *naked* diaper-free time.

Why We Should Not Overdo *Naked* Time

First, too much naked time could cause your baby to stop signaling as strongly, or at all, which makes sense. **Why signal if I'm already naked?**

Next, your baby might learn that peeing on the floor, or on the cloth pad he's laying on, is okay. Which it's not, really, right? Right.

Last, we wear clothing in our society, so your baby must also learn how to wear clothing and keep it dry.

Reasons To Do More *Naked* Time

If you are starting EC with a more mobile baby (5 months+, and especially 12 months+), you may decide to spend some additional time naked to reinforce cause & effect (they experience that pee comes out when they release their bladder). If you just like having a naked baby bum around, no matter the baby's age, you might want to do more nakey time too.

If you have a baby who doesn't pee on the floor when naked, go for it, ya'll! If baby signals *better when naked*, awesome. Do it. If your older baby takes herself to the potty independently at home only (or mostly) when naked, do it! Also, if you struggle with diaper rash, naked time is one of the only things that helps. So you'd want to do it then, too.

In any case, just see #3, below, to learn how to modify it with an older baby, so you don't teach her to pee on the floor (again, a common problem faced by some ECers).

How to *Modify Diaper-Free Time* When Baby Becomes Mobile

Okay, so you've gathered your info (signals/timing/awareness), cleared up the diaper rash, want to continue having a nudist child, whatever (no judgment!). Your child is becoming more mobile by the day, and her brain is building permanent pathways on how to do stuff.

Let's modify naked time with your mobile baby to place some building blocks for eventual potty independence into your EC practice:

1. **Model the movement "to the potty" during *naked* time.** When your baby has hit 9 months or so (when the ability to consistently hold

a short-term memory kicks in, and when baby becomes even more mobile), it's time to demonstrate moving to the potty during **naked** diaper-free time every time she begins to pee – bring baby to the potty or bring the potty to baby and have her sit on it. More on this below.

2. **Use a clothing backup during *non-naked* diaper-free time.** To limit "pee everywhere" and increase learning during mobile baby diaper-free time, put your babe in clothing such as cloth trainers, tiny underwear, or elastic-topped pants that are easy to remove. Experiment to see which clothing your baby signals most in/responds best to and which back-up helps you to retain the most sanity.

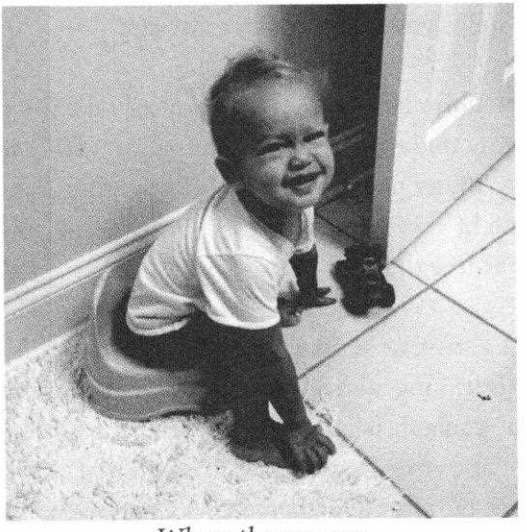
3. **When you're done using daytime diapers**, take the plunge and use cloth trainers, tiny underwear, or go commando with pants only *during all waking times*. Many parents do this once walking is mastered, some sooner. You might have some laundry, but I want you to know this counts as "diaper-free time." Yay!

Ok to revisit #1 above, as soon as naked diaper-free time has served its purpose (signals/timing/awareness) **and** the [approximate] 9 month mark has been reached, **when** you see your baby peeing or pooping during **naked** diaper-free time say "wait" or "potty" and quietly, gently, move her to the potty and sit her on it (or move the potty to baby, placing it behind her calves and having her sit on it). If you only catch a drop, that's fine. Do not panic, do not become gruff, excited, or anxious. Just matter-of-factly guide her by bringing her to the potty. Or bring the potty to her. Do not say much. In fact, if you want to say something that will model for her what to say to you when she needs to go in the future, say "I need to peepee Mama/Papa" while you airlift her. Again, your goal here is to *model* what it's like to take herself to the potty.

If she is playing with something when she starts to pee, bring the toy or book with her. This will prevent potential meltdown. If you get resistance, pick baby up and hold her for a sec, maybe walk around a bit, before putting her back on the potty. Or check your own relaxation level. Deep breath. Try again, possibly on a different receptacle.

If you don't feel like doing this transporting stuff, then don't do *naked* diaper-free time with your mobile baby all that often, or exclude it from your practice by using underwear or training pants as a non-diaper, diaper-free back-up during diaper-free time. (Again, this also qualifies as "diaper-free time"!)

Bottom Line: You don't want to teach your mobile baby that it's okay to pee on the floor. Right? Right. Do the above 3 things during diaper-free time and you'll be good to go.



Where the pee goes

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF POTTY INDEPENDENCE

STEPS TO POTTY INDEPENDENCE + GRADUATION

This section helps you do what no other EC resource will: it gives you the basic building blocks of completing EC with your little one. I believe that every child, of the appropriate developmental stage and capability, deserves to feel the mastery of completing a process. With pottying, this involves mastery over a process regarding your child's very own body. This is huge.

THE HISTORY OF "DON'T FOCUS ON COMPLETION"

Completion hasn't always been part of the EC landscape, and isn't emphasized in other resources. It makes sense why the other EC texts shy away from a focus on completion. This focus can pressure the process. Pressure does not jive with EC.

Completion should not be your *focus* when you are beginning EC. It will inevitably pressure the experience. However, completion is *part of* the EC process (it is part of many processes). "Don't focus on completion" is kind of like saying, "wait until they're ready" regarding potty training. It sounds good on the surface but deep down, it just doesn't hold up. Very rarely do children tell a parent they are ready to be potty trained. The same is true of EC – very rarely do babies naturally complete EC without being taught any skills or receiving any guidance.

We can teach our children the "building blocks" of pottying so they can one day do it themselves. And it doesn't need to involve coercion, pressure, or rewards — just developmentally-appropriate teaching.

If you prefer to do purist EC, I'll support ya. Simply omit this section. Don't teach. Just know that, as it stood before this section was written, most parents of ECed children had to either figure out their own way of

completing the process, feeling intuitively there must be an end to it, or let it drag on too long, not knowing what else to do.

EC did not (for them) prepare their children for potty independence because it lacked certain taught skills. If you want to teach your child some things that will naturally complement the inevitable end to this process, read on.

Other Cultures Complete

I once read that indigenous mamas would "shoo" their babies out of the house if they had a miss on the floor when they were beyond the age of "knowing better." So, there is an understanding between mother and child that basically says, "Hey, you know the drill. Take care of it yourself, the way we all do it."

It's not done in a harsh way, this "shooing." It's actually just socialization, and since we don't pee everywhere, and we wear clothes, your child also gets to be socialized! The *way* you do it is what makes it EC, and not conventional toilet training. You rooted your EC practice in listening to your child's signals and then responding by helping her do what she couldn't yet do herself. This is communication.

Taking it to the next step, it is now your job to teach/model/demonstrate how she can start doing it herself. I fondly call it "Passing the Baton." It happens in little stages, when you know a piece is missing, and it helps to empower the little person who is grasping for things she can "do myself."

It is not done with force or coercion. It is just a little "on-the-job training" because, yes, babies are born wanting to potty hygienically, but they aren't born knowing how to pull down their pants, sit on a foreign object like a potty (and stay there), or how to state their need in a form you clearly understand (like a phrase!). Passing the Baton can be fun and rewarding, and a feeling of mastery will warm you both.

Permission to Teach

Before we get into how to pass said baton, I'd like to give you permission to teach, and even "train," your child. Might sound silly, but in our society we have a block about this, which sometimes results in feral mutant tyrant children (kidding/not kidding).

We have, as the natural, gentle parenting generations, gone from our parents' strict authoritarian styles to some which are completely *permissive*. As Dr. Sears shared in his books on Attachment Parenting, especially The Discipline Book, both of those styles aren't gonna work. Somewhere between we can take charge and be gentle at the same time. Somewhere along the way, "teaching" has become a questionable practice. "Training" has been blacklisted. Understandably!

In this book, I share with you that "EC is not 'training' your baby. EC is listening to the signals your baby is already giving and helping her meet her instinctual needs for cleanliness and dryness." And this is true. This is how it begins, anyway. But there *does* come a time for teaching and training (as I said, you can consider it on-the-job training, if you want). So, I hereby give you permission to teach. To enable. To facilitate. To demonstrate. To model. Whatever you want to call it. And I give you permission to do it at the appropriate developmental phase, regardless of other people's judgments.

I also give you permission to not overdo it, not hyperfocus on it, to leave room for absorption (silence, time, space), and be balanced in your teaching. I do not think it's helpful to nag, criticize, helicopter, hover, hound, or annoy your child, nor to expect more of them than is psychologically, physically, emotionally, mentally, or physiologically possible at any particular age. However, please know that EC can drag on longer than is helpful.

EC Can Drag On...

The field of Elimination Communication already gets mixed reviews in the media. When EC drags on in an unhealthy way, well beyond the age when a toddler can do it himself, this inadvertently gives EC a bad rap.

It's kind of like allowing a child to poop in a diaper for 4 years. Allowing a kid to "pee anywhere" for 4 years is very similar, isn't it?

The cool thing is that we can prevent EC from dragging on in an unhealthy way. Although parenting toddlers can be difficult and bewildering at times (I feel ya), they are also begging for mastery. It is developmentally necessary for things to be mastered. So we can help.

Why Mastery is So Essential for Toddlers

Toddlers throw fits. They make confusing (to us) demands. They have tantrums. (Ok, maybe yours doesn't, but mine do.) Part of why they throw a fit is because they want to do it themselves but can't quite do it just yet, and that's deeply frustrating for them.

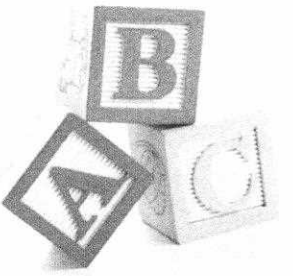
By teaching some things, like the building blocks I'm about to share with you, you can lessen your toddler's frustration. This is good news!

Potty Pause Prevention - Giving the Tools to "Do It Myself"

Okay, so this train of thought leads me to a key point relating to EC: potty pause prevention. In the Potty Pause section I outline many ways to stifle the pause, including understanding that sometimes it's just part of the process. Potty pauses *can* be part of the process *if they want to do it themselves but can't quite execute everything on their own.* Teaching some building blocks and preparing your baby for independence *when developmentally appropriate* can help prevent an aforementioned potty pause. Hooray!

The Building Blocks: What Can Be Taught, and When

And finally, we've made it past all the philosophy and to the point of WHAT can be taught and WHEN. Woohoo! I call these the Building Blocks of Potty Independence because they set a strong foundation for the future we are creating.



Remember to teach these skills only when you feel it is developmentally appropriate (although I suggest some ages that have worked for others), and feel free to add in your own ideas, tools, skills, and processes along the way.

Moving to the Potty/Bathroom

This may seem silly, but some kids need to learn the general direction to walk or run so they can get near the potty to eventually do their business. You can first model the motion *to the potty* by airlifting your baby mid-pee during naked time while saying "wait" and then gently putting him on the potty, saying the thing you want him to eventually say to you (like "potty Mama/Papa"). (Alternatively, you can move the potty *to* your baby, place it behind his calves, and have him sit.)

I wouldn't necessarily do this prior to 9 months old, but you can choose when it feels right to model and teach during naked time. (The reason for 9 months is this the average age when babies retain short-term memories.) Also, you won't want to do this long, as I speak about in the Responsible Diaper-free Time section, so if you wanted to do a 1-2 day intensive modeling this action, at months 9, 12, and 15, it might help. Your choice!

You can also teach your baby how to get herself *to the bathroom* when she becomes more mobile. Most often, this happens upon walking. I taught a song called "run, run, run to the bathroom" where we shuffled together to the bathroom from the other room, then added the sitting song, up next.

Teaching to Mount the Potty

Obviously, you can begin to teach this activity when your child can stand and, preferably, walk. My dear friend, who potty trained her children at 15 + 18 months back in the day, suggested I teach Kaiva how to sit on the potty when we were in EC limbo at 13 months. It had never dawned on me! She did it with hers by sitting on it herself, to model it for them.

Since I love to dance, and my first son showed an interest in that, too, we made up a dance called "back, back, squat." I showed him how to shuffle backward and squat on the pot. I also showed him how to mount from the side. We did this during a 2-day naked time experiment, and he eventually got the hang of it but only did it once himself that day. Within a few weeks, he began doing it himself more often.

We integrated "run, run, run to the bathroom" with "back, back, squat" and our son finally had the missing pieces that allowed him to claim more of the process for himself. For a toddler, this is golden. We had the same success using this rhyme with our 4 other babies.

You can also teach them how to mount the potty (or seat reducer, with stool), by having other slightly older, potty trained kids demonstrate on your child's potty. Our older children have helped teach our babies this skill. If all else fails, show some YouTube videos of other kids using their potties and "how to sit" might just click.

Remember, they are born wanting to crawl or toddle off to do their business where other humans used to go (outdoors); they were not born knowing how to sit on a foreign object like a potty. It's a good thing to teach!

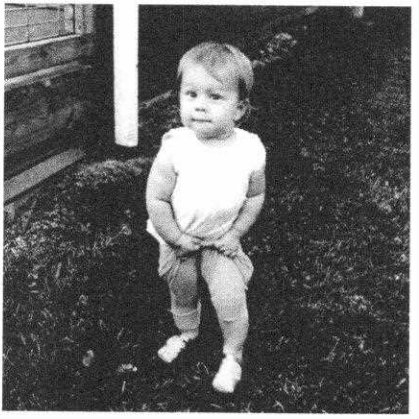
Oh, and if your child can stand or "creep" along furniture, is not yet walking, but shows a willingness to learn, you can have her stand in front of the potty (with her back to it) and then push the mini potty up to her calves, then say, "Ok, you can sit now."

Prompting and Signal Phrases

You can also teach your child what you want them to eventually say (or sign) to you. *This will ultimately replace the cueing noises you've been using.* As you and your child make your way to the bathroom/potty, say the phrase. It can be simple like "potty" or "need to pee." Or it can be sign language or nonverbal communication (like pointing to the bathroom). During the pee, not before or after, say "pee pee" or sign "toilet" to strengthen the association; you can use a different sign or word from what you used as you made your way to the bathroom.

This can happen whenever you feel it's right – it is okay at any age to model the thing you want her to eventually say/sign.

Pulling Down Pants (Pushing Down Pants)



One method to do this is to have your child sit on a low stool, and then you pull his pants halfway down. Then tell him to grab the pants and pull them the rest of the way off. Another way is to, instead of saying "take your pants off" or "pull your pants off," encourage your child to grab at the material and hold on. Then help her "push" in the right direction (down). You can also try to get a more dexterous child to hook his thumbs in his waistband and move them down his legs himself. Dress your young toddler in baggy elastic-waist pants to give him the chance to practice without your influence – most children do this eventually without any guidance.

Teaching how to push down pants can happen when your child can walk and/or has improved hand-eye coordination (This may be earlier than you think! You can experiment at different times to see.).

Wiping

For babies 0-18 months, proficient wiping is still a long time off. When the time comes, use these instructions to teach the skill; this is often around 3 years old. Meanwhile, there are some ways to expose your baby to wiping now that will prepare her for this future step.

For pee, you will not have to teach a boy to wipe his peenie, but you will teach a girl to "blot" her yoni for good hygiene. This is as easy as handing her a small wad of toilet paper and telling her to touch it to herself and then drop it in the bowl. As she becomes more adept, encourage her to wipe from front to back, not back to front, for obvious reasons.

For poop wiping, here is a suggestion: have your child grab three squares of toilet paper and wad them up or fold them, depending on his fine motor skills. Have him bend over and put the toilet paper in his bottom crevice as far as he can, and see if any poop is on the toilet paper. If he has ever explored his anus in the bathtub, this should be no problem. If not, help him feel where it is by manually guiding his hand there. Then, have him repeat the check with a new three squares of toilet paper to see if the tp comes out clean or has poop on it still. When there is no longer poop on the tp, it's all done. *Try again until the paper comes out clean and there is no poop on it.*

If your child gets frustrated, simply guide her hand and try again, or if you've got a meltdown brewing, ask her to bend over, wipe her yourself, and tell her to check the toilet paper and see if it's clean or dirty. Then, at least there is some learning going on, and try again next time.

You can also gradually introduce wiping by doing it all yourself first while briefly narrating what you're doing, then starting it and having him finish, or having him begin the wiping and you finish it up, and

lastly, having him do the whole process. This is a long game, so stay patient.

Again, you can begin to teach your baby to wipe when she is able to sit unassisted, and you can teach proficient wiping around 3 years old, sometimes sooner.

Throwing the Toilet Paper in the Toilet

Always a fun step! Unless it's a soiled poopy mess, just fold over the toilet paper after you or she wipes, and say, "Throw it in!" If you are using a mini potty, she can stand up and throw it into the big toilet.

Pulling Up Pants

This can be a challenging skill for our wee ones. That cute little booty seems to get in the way of getting those pants up and on. It is often helpful to have a full-length mirror in a non-potty-part of your bathroom so your child can see what's going on (I don't recommend placing it in front of the potty, as that may cause distractions, but somewhere else, such as on the wall behind the door or on the door itself).

As I mentioned in the pushing down pants part above, you may want to dress your child in looser elastic-topped pants and perhaps a size up in undies for a couple weeks to help her feel a sense of ease in accomplishing this step. Once it has been mastered, you can revert back to normal-fitting clothing. Focus on this every day for a few minutes, during potty time or at another focused teaching time, and eventually your child will get it.

If the undies are completely off, have your child identify the undies tag and teach her that this part goes in the back. Hold open the waist and show her where the leg holes are. After she puts her legs into the holes, pull them up to her knees, then ask her to stand and pull them up. I've created underwear that have visual cues that actually teach self-dressing and how to put on and pull up undies properly – find out more about LEARN Tiny Undies and LEARN Tiny Trainers in Appendix 1.

Another recommendation I've read is to have your child pull up the back of the pants with one hand while pulling up the front with the other (instead of having one hand at each side). This should help him get over that rump. Alternatively, you can pull up the backside of the pants while he pulls up the front, until he gets the hang of the whole thing. Or just help in any way you can. Don't overthink it, but do teach it over time and encourage her to eventually do it herself.

You can teach how to pull up pants when your baby is able to sit unassisted although, in time, your young toddler will begin to experiment without your influence.

Dumping the Potty

If you're using a mini potty, teach your child how to remove the bowl (if any) or pick the potty up (if it's one piece) and carefully dump the potty in the big toilet. You'd be surprised at what age children are capable of doing this! You can guide her hands at first and "do it together," then work your way toward "you can do it yourself." Kids always show a sense of pride at dumping their own potties and being careful with them.

This can begin once your child has completely mastered walking (obviously!). I like to walk closely with my young toddlers to "spot" the potty (catch it if it begins to fall) in the early stages of this lesson.

Flushing

Toddlers love flushing so much that this may not be something you have to teach. Pulling the handle down with two hands is a nice suggestion that makes it a tiny bit easier to flush the toilet. Don't forget to say "bye-bye" to the poop or pee! Then close that lid. Gently. You can prevent fear of flushing by doing it when your baby is in your arms, starting at 3 or 4 months old. To gradually expose an already-fearful child to flushing, try it in stages: flush when he is out of the bathroom, then gradually inside the bathroom, and eventually have him participate by doing it together.

Children can typically flush the toilet on their own by about 2 years old, but this depends on their motor skills and the strength of your flusher! You can begin to expose them to flushing as early as 3-4 months old, and teach them to do it with your help when they are tall enough to reach it.

Washing Hands

Have a step stool handy that can get your child within reaching distance of the running water. Use whatever soap floats your boat: foaming pumps or colorful bars or something that smells yummy... whatever. The goal for your child is to get that lather going. We want bubbles! A friend of mine either counts with her children or sings the ABCs together every time, to ensure the washing has gone on long enough. For a young toddler, you can do the singing while she hums along. Then rinse, dry hands, and the bathroom routine is done.

You can teach how to wash hands when your young toddler is standing without assistance, or earlier if you want to hold her at the sink while you wash.

Teaching a Bathroom Routine

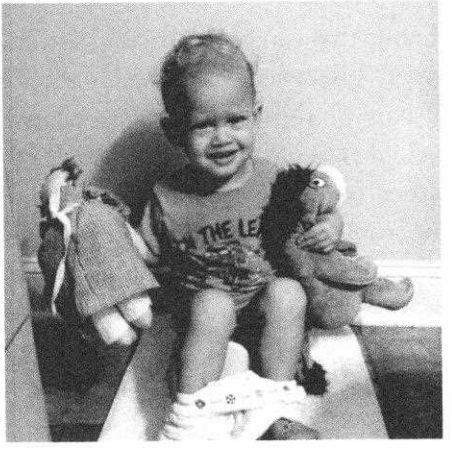
Another thing that works for kiddos is a bathroom routine. This can be fun, and young toddlers love predictability, patterns, and rhythms in their day. Repetition creates mastery... and heaps of pride. An example routine: run to the potty, flip on the light switch, push down pants, sit on the potty, [tinkle or poop], wipe, put the toilet paper in the toilet, pull up pants, dump the potty (if any), flush the toilet, wash hands, flip off the light switch, back to playtime. This can take the focus off of the potty act and can instead be a fun way to learn a whole routine. Remember, toddlers love mastery, and doing grown-up things.

You can teach the whole bathroom routine as early as your baby can crawl and/or sit by reading your child a book on the topic.

RESOURCE: My board book, *Tiny Potty*, teaches the whole routine from awareness to going back to play, without a focus on diapers. See Appendix 4.

Peeing with Peers...Er, Toys

If your child doesn't have siblings or neighbors with young kids, she might want some company while peeing. It makes her feel more social, as if she can help her stuffed animals and toys pee, too.



Bring a toy along, ask him if the tractor or doll needs to pee too, or maybe if they want to pee with him, and then let them each do their thing in the potty. This is included in the teaching section because it encourages the social aspect of pottying: everyone does it, including our toys, and we can do it together. It can help fill the community void for an only child.

You can teach peeing with companions as soon as baby is sitting, but honestly, young toddlers will do this on their own accord at some point or another!

RESOURCE: "Bear" (from my board books) is available as a stuffed potty companion. See Appendix 4.

When Full-On Completion is Possible

It's all based on capability, *not readiness*. I recommend starting to pass the baton when your baby is 12-18 months old. This span is what

Montessori school of thought calls the "sensitive period" for a child to successfully master self-toileting. And when your child starts to show most of these signs (they indicate that her brain can now hold a long-term, repetitive action and execute it regularly, which typically happens within this age range), full completion is usually in the bag. Just remember, you can start wrapping up the EC process long before any of these signs are present, and I recommend starting this at walking.

Per Jamie Glowacki, non-coercive potty training expert, the following are signs that your child is *capable* of being potty independent:

> "I use 3 of 4 markers to gauge readiness:
> ... Does your child have a grasp on the ABC song?...
> Can your child communicate, in any manner, that she needs food because she is hungry?
> Can your child communicate, in any manner, that he needs fluids because he is thirsty?
> Can your child throw a tantrum, for anything?
> You may laugh at this, but listen: a tantrum, any tantrum, is due to your child wanting something and you not giving it. *It means your child is aware of his desires.* If your child is capable of being aware of and acting on his bodily functions of hunger, thirst and desires, then your child is capable of being aware of and acting on his bodily functions of pee and poop."

I agree with Jamie. Once 3 out of 4 of these markers are there, then *full* completion is imminent. The *capability* is there. The rest is up to you to guide, teach, and encourage. But, again, start wrapping things up by placing the building blocks of potty independence long before these markers appear, especially by walking.

How to Complete the EC Process

How to finish this up then? Okay, so, basically, it's as simple as a major shift in *your* thinking and direction. You'll want to turn the boat around,

firmly yet gently, and hold your ground. *Switch to undies instead of diapers or trainers.* Trust in the process. Do it confidently and don't look back.

When should you begin to wrap it up? In case this is not yet crystal-clear: begin wrapping up EC when your child has mastered walking. The first step is changing their awake-time back-up from a diaper to undies. This one step makes a HUGE impact and, although scary for some parents, shows your child that you trust her and her capabilities. She will rise to the occasion.

Continue what you've been doing already: respond, prompt, and teach him the above skills until he can put the building blocks into place and take himself. Repetition, my dear. Consistency. It's like learning to tie his shoes, eat with a fork, walk, or put his toys up. It takes daily practice and some time set aside to focus (not hyper-focus) on it.

Start with daytime completion, and night will follow thereafter (you may still use a nighttime back-up, long as you wish, and try the dream pee as explained in the Nighttime section). You may have the occasional miss during this process, but keep with it, keep communicating, stay gentle yet firm, and know that even conventionally toilet trained children have accidents during changes, developmental milestones, illness, and teething.

You'll need to continue to prompt based on when you see her "peepee dance," when you know it's time, when it's convenient for the flow of your day (like when you're about to go in the car for a while, you'd prompt beforehand), and when the timing seems right (based on natural or generic timing). Honor the "no" and still stay present to other obvious signs.

Don't overdo it, but if your child is busily playing or surrounded by new playmates, you'll have to remind him at the appropriate times. They sometimes forget. Support by reminding, not questioning, but *taking* (with the tractor or doll in tow, if necessary) your child to the potty. *It's time to go pee.*

And remember: DO NOT OVERTALK. Overtalking smells like fear. More importantly, it leaves no room for the child to think or speak. They're not able to integrate what you've been saying if you never take a break from speaking. So KEEP IT SIMPLE, MA AND PA! Just continue to do the same pottying routine, by the same predictable rhythm, day in and day out, with very few words, supporting where needed, prompting when needed, and with this *consistency* and *commitment*, it will be done.

IF you need more help than these instructions here, and your child is nearing 16-18 months at this point, see the Mobile Baby and Young Toddler Modifications and Maintenance section (including the Hybrid Plan) for completion tips.

TAKE A DEEP DIVE: I made a minicourse called Wrapping Up EC that covers completion, step-by-step, with either "pure EC" or the Hybrid Plan (which, although included as part of this book as a digital download, is fully explained in the minicourse). See Appendix 4.

If this still isn't enough, no worries! You can wrap up EC with my other book on non-coercive potty training (see Appendix 4). It's got a special section dedicated to completing potty independence if you've ECed for any amount of time. (Many folks do a *potty training experience* at 16 months or older.) There is *no* shame in completing EC with a potty training experience – parents do it all the time.

Now for some final words on potty independence.

Potty Independence: It's About Baby's Capability *and* Parent's Direction

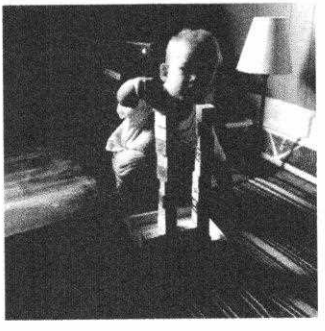
You are the parent, you are in charge, and you guide this little ship until she can guide herself. Yes, she is born knowing she needs to pee and preferring to pee elsewhere than in her pants. Beyond that, you are helping her, guiding her on where said pee goes, and how to sit on that contraption it's supposed to go into.

In order to achieve full potty independence:

1. your child needs to be developmentally and physically capable of those things you are teaching (like he's finally walking) **and**
2. you, the parent, need to be clear, self-assured, and committed to your direction (are you *done* with EC and diapers?).

Take an honest look at whether you are unconsciously keeping your "baby" a baby or whether you are honoring your emerging toddler's independence and desire to learn how to do things himself. Remember, this is a gift you are giving him.

I guess I'm getting to this point: when we wrap up EC, we are building *a bridge* between the pure form of EC we all started with and the inevitable approach of potty independence. We are preparing baby for success and independence. Be assured, firm, yet gentle about where you're going, and how. Your baby is counting on you to be the expert about where pee and poop go. She's counting on you to eventually pass the baton. *When* she reaches that stage, she'll be longing for mastery. You can gift that to her (through the steps you've just learned in this section) or let her find it for herself, organically. Either way is perfect.



Chapter 3: Philosophy

EC Philosophy: Useful Background Information

In this section we'll get into some background information that authors typically put in the front of the stack. I believe in teaching this stuff last (because if you never "do" EC, what's the point?). If anything, the information that follows will help you create and imagine a frame of reference for all the practical how-to's you've learned (and hopefully practiced) thus far. It may also inspire you to persevere should EC become challenging.

Topics range from Definitions to Philosophy, Vocab to Starting Ages and Reasons.

Before we get into these sections, I will share a little more about what to know about EC before beginning (or when re-starting) and a few big picture tips.

What to Know Before Beginning

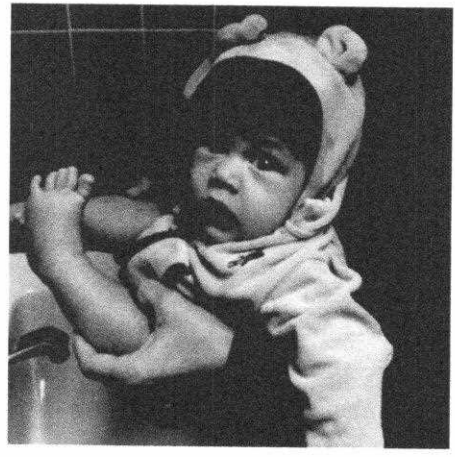
What is EC?

EC is a non-coercive, gentle way to potty an infant from as early as birth, following a baby's natural awareness of her elimination and her instincts to keep herself, her caregivers, and her sleep space dry. It is basically what humans have done with their babies for all of human history.

A Few Keys

- EC is gentle. Hold your baby gently, speak gently, and handle the whole process with care.
- EC is non-coercive. It doesn't involve praise, rewards, punishment, force, anger, or consequences.

- EC is about communication, connection, responsive caregiving, and making future potty independence smoother and less confusing. It is not about goals, pressure, timelines, conventional "potty training," or completion (though I will show you how to complete should you want that).
- EC is not about hovering or obsessing. It's not about making your baby the center of your attention. It is about "keeping an ear out" (while you do grown-up things, perhaps while wearing your baby), and maintaining awareness around & assisting with elimination (as we do when we notice that the baby needs to eat or sleep). The cause of 95% of potty pauses is offering too much and/or hovering!
- EC does not have to be done full time, catching every single pee and poop. It is often done with great success "part time" if that works better for the whole family.
- EC is fun. Laugh often. Marvel in the awesomeness of what you're witnessing (the easy times and the more challenging times).
- If you become frustrated about or stressed out by ECing, take a breath, regain your center, let a few misses happen, do not punish or complain to the baby, and seek support (hop on the Private Support Group right away). Don't quit, just zoom out and re-collect yourself for a little bit. I KNOW it can be challenging. We are here to support you because anyone who does EC needs support.



A Big Picture Message

Here are a few things parents and caregivers should know prior to beginning the EC journey:

- You don't have to toss out the diapers today. The diaper is a "back up" from this day forward, no longer a toilet. It is there when you "miss" each other, when you're not doing EC (if you're doing it part-time), when you have a "miss," and when you need it (like while traveling). Paradigm shift!
- You are simply "zooming out" to see one more basic need that you get to help your baby with until he can help himself (like feeding, sleeping, and providing warmth).
- Your child follows your lead. If you, the parent, are equipped, you both will do much, much better at this. (In other words, read up and get support!)
- You are not going to psychologically damage your child to potty teach before 2 years old. So long as you don't tie them to the potty chair, you can not possibly damage them for life. ;) If you need proof, see my blog for all the scientific studies.
- Your child has sphincter control (as early as day one) and can indeed use those muscles. (Your pediatrician may say otherwise.)
- You can do EC part time or full time – just be consistent when you are "on it" and try to set a sustainable rhythm for yourselves (i.e., wake-ups and poops only, evenings only, etc.)
- Being gentle sometimes includes being firm. You may have to [gently] put your foot down, at times that make sense to you, occasionally. Children thrive with boundaries, including babies, and especially including toddlers.
- Mastery is good for your child. Especially toddlers. You are not rushing anything by teaching tools for independence in this personal process.
- Long-term, repetitive tasks cannot be consistently held in the brain until its development finishes up between 14-18 months. Have age-appropriate expectations. Basically: before this brain development is finished (marked by the ability to sing a song or

do a certain process the same every single time), you will need to help your child in some way, and it may be in a different way each time until he gets it consistently on his own.

- When doing EC, you will have to pass the baton. You can't hold children over a potty forever and then one day expect them to go on their own. Passing the baton = teaching stuff so they can be independent. We will cover that in depth, so don't worry!
- You might never, ever stop prompting (well, maybe when your baby becomes a teenager). This is part of the process. Potty independence is a team effort. Just like reminding your child to eat when it's time, you will occasionally have to notice that 'peepee dance' and prompt your child to go.
- The learning curve is completely non-linear. Stick with it and eventually you'll end up with a straight line. Things come together in a random, unpredictable order. Rely on noticing the tiny successes to keep you motivated.
- Notice when you're obsessing or hovering in this process and try to stop. Your child will react negatively to this unseen pressure. If your child becomes resistant, teach something, give more independence, wrap it up completely, or back off some. Offer less often. But stay with it. Tricky balance, I know!

Defining EC

Simply put, Elimination Communication is the original human infant pottying method. It is the natural alternative to full-time diapering and conventional potty training. It is a gentle, non-coercive way to respond to a baby's elimination needs, from birth, which enables her to follow her instincts to not soil herself, her caretaker, or her sleep space.

Yes, you heard me right. Human babies, like all mammals, are born with an *instinct* (and a fine set of supporting hormones) to not pee or poop on themselves, you, or their bed. They are born disliking feeling soiled and prefer to maintain good overall hygiene. Although the instincts for poop are often stronger than pee, some babies don't mind occasional wetness.

Baby Instincts

Believe it or not, there was life before diaper dependence (even cloth dipes), and babies & parents coped just fine. For 200,000 years of our current human form, human babies have always communicated their needs so mama and papa could help keep them, the bed, and the baby tidy.

We crate-train puppies because they are less likely to go in their "dens" and will hold their potty needs. We also find that babies inherently do not wish to soil themselves and actually have control over when they release. (Ever changed a newborn just to have him pee right when that diaper has been removed? I'll give you a hint... it wasn't the cold air.)

However, over that 200,000 years of *Homo sapiens* existence, various forms of "back-up" have been used in the place of diaper dependence, where the climate or weather dictated it. Absorbent mosses, animal furs, soft leathers, and cotton-y plant matter have often been utilized within the swaddling wrap during the first 6 months of life in regions where babies were carried or worn by nomadic people and/or where babies had to wear warmer clothing. When the baby became old enough to crawl to the urinating pit or outdoor area (or when baby was held in-arms), these "back-up" materials were no longer used. Hence, they had zero diaper dependence. The back-up materials were used as a tool instead (as with EC, I encourage diapers to be used as a tool, not a full-time toilet).

Cloth diapers were made commercially available about 200 years ago. This created the possibility of somewhat limited diaper dependence (limited only by the mother's desire to wash said diapers!) and babies were usually potty independent between 9 and 18 months (by the time they were walking well).

In 1957, 92% of US babies were done with potty training by 18 months old. Disposable diapers, which hit the market in 1961, have bumped the average age up to 36 months in the US. Disposables have gotten really

good at wicking moisture away from little bottoms, however, this simply delays the inevitable. These types of diapers (and some modern cloth versions) are, in fact, a bandaid, and the marketing of these diapers has changed the way we parent.

Today's disposables make conventional potty training necessary (and really, really difficult down the road). Although super-diapers temporarily satisfy baby's desire to have dry pants, they also teach him that, contrary to his instincts, the diaper is the place to potty. Babies are not wired to pee in a diaper and sit in their refuse. We teach them that. Babies are actually born ready to potty in appropriate places. The next step is a choice: show him you go in a diaper or show him you go in a potty. This is where EC comes into the picture.

EC is simply about maintaining a newborn baby's in-born awareness of, and communication about, elimination.

But How Could One Possibly Know a Baby Needs to Pee?

Just as babies "ask" to be fed, for help going to sleep, or to be held, they also ask for assistance relieving themselves away from their body, bed, and you. Babies' cries communicate many things. Learning to respond to elimination needs is as simple as learning to respond to your baby's need for food, sleep, warmth, play, and holding.

Parents in the Western world aren't attuned to pottying needs or signals. These cries are misunderstood, at times mistaken for "colic" or unexplained fussiness that has the potential to make parents feel helpless. In other countries, these communications have always been understood and honored, and if you look far enough back in American history, they used to be honored here, too. Somewhere along the way, this connection has become lost to the Western world. We've become deaf to a call for a baby's basic need to be met.

I certainly never considered the possibility of a diaper-free baby for most of my life. I wasn't raised that way, and neither were you. Somewhere along the line, we replaced EC with supposed convenience. *Diaper 'em up, do less laundry, put off potty training as long as you can, live the easy life.* However, this "convenience" has negatively affected our babies' trust in their instincts & ability to communicate, their overall level of hygiene, and the cleanliness of our environment. Not to mention our pocketbooks.

All Over the World...Except Here

Our fellow humans in parts of India, Africa, South America, China, and all other regions inhabited by indigenous or third world populations still potty babies from day one. They never had (and many hopefully never will have) a dependence upon diapers. A few Westerners noticed this, studied it, and adapted the practice for modern-day use, relearning an old art and naming it "elimination communication." In recent years, EC has re-emerged from the archives of the not-so-distant past. And hopefully just in time!

Us Compared to 1/2 of the World

Wise Westerners would agree that potty training has gotten a little out of hand on many levels including controversial training methods, length of time to completion, the fact that many children are still wearing diapers to pre-school, the negative medical effects of wearing diapers past 2 years old, etc.

The Shocking Statistics

- The average age for potty training completion in the US is now 35-39 months (Ambulatory Pediatrics, 2001).
- Over 50% of the world's children are potty trained by 1 year old (Contemporary Pediatrics, 2004).
- In 1957 92% of babies in the US were potty trained by 18 months (NY Times, 1999). (Disposable diapers hit the market in 1961.)

Wow. Wow. I just don't know what to say.

Many Names

The Many Names for EC

- Elimination Communication (EC)
- Infant Potty Training (IPT)
- Infant Pottying
- Diaper-Free
- Natural Infant Hygiene (NIH)
- Potty Whispering
- Assisted Infant Toilet Training (AITT)
- Baby Pottying
- Trickle Treat (TT)
- Baby-Led Pottying

There sure are a lot of names floating around. For the sake of simplicity in our conversation, I'll just call the practice EC.

By the way, I use the phrase "infant potty training" somewhat often. I borrowed this phrase from author Laurie Boucke for the same reason she uses it: so people in mainstream society will instantly know what I'm talking about. Elimination Communication isn't exactly a mainstream phrase (yet). However, I don't want to give the impression that this is a boot camp, or that this is "potty training."

In my understanding of EC, there is a small amount of training necessary, but I like to consider it "on the job training." Babies are born

wanting to potty hygienically, but they aren't born knowing exactly know how to sit on a potty, remove their pants, or signal with the words we'd prefer them to use.

A handful of potty-related things need to be taught along the way, so the phrase "infant potty training" isn't as repulsive to me as it is for some EC folks. So, call it what you like. As with everything, it's your choice.

Some Simple Definitions

DiaperFreeBaby, a wonderful nonprofit dedicated to sharing about EC (and organizing worldwide EC support groups as partners of the Go Diaper Free Certified Coach network), has a lovely definition of Elimination Communication on their homepage that I'd like to share here.

"Elimination Communication (EC) is NOT potty training. It is a gentle, natural, non-coercive process by which a baby, preferably beginning in early infancy, learns with the loving assistance of parents and caregivers to communicate about and address his or her elimination needs. This practice makes conventional potty training unnecessary."

Furthermore, their brochures define EC in this way:

"Babies are aware of their elimination needs from birth and communicate those needs through various vocal and bodily signals. From the first few months of life, babies have the ability to consciously release their bladders and bowels when offered appropriate pottying opportunities. When we practice elimination communication (EC), we recognize their signals and enable our babies to maintain a connection with their bodily sensations."

Very nicely said! And although I didn't write these words, yes, I am now the Director of their organization. Our joint network of Certified Coaches provides free EC support groups around the world. See Appendix 3 to find one (or become one) in your area.

Well, What About Conventional Toilet Training?

Conventional toilet training experts recommend waiting to potty train until your child "shows signs of readiness." Nurses are taught in nursing school that children lack sphincter control until 18 months of age, and potty training shouldn't start until then. Other "experts" claim that the child needs to initiate the process or otherwise "tell" you that he's ready to be done with diapers.

The truth is that babies are born with sphincter control (everyone in our EC community, including yours truly, who has started at birth reports this anecdotally – you can decide whether that is proof enough for you!). Also truth? The child doesn't have to be *ready* to toilet train (that is a "recommendation" from T. B. Brazelton, head pediatrician of the Pampers Institute); they only must be *capable* of toilet training. While all babies are born *capable* of indicating the need to use the toilet, *readiness* criteria have more to do with selling billions of dollars of diapers than determining the healthiest age to begin potty training.

Last, a very small percentage of children self-initiate and complete potty training when "ready," usually at 3-4 years old when they realize they're the only ones in their peer group pooping their pants. Waiting for a child to tell you he's done with diapers is not the best advice, but it sells a heck-of-a-lot of diapers.

This is all my way of saying that most of our present potty training "knowledge" is very, very questionable. I learned from my mentor here in Asheville, who worked for Pampers for 35 years but shall not be named because he is still a shareholder, that this potty training "knowledge" has been funded by the disposable diaper companies for decades. They've taught our pediatricians to teach us to "wait," that we will damage our children if we train too soon, and many more untruths.

That leaves many of us toilet training toddlers, and we all know what stage toddlers are in: ultra-explorative, short attention span, frequent use of the word "No!" And how confusing might it be for a toddler to suddenly be encouraged to use a potty instead of a diaper as his toilet? Utterly. Happily, there is a way to avoid this by doing EC.

As compared to conventional toilet training, EC is less coercive, less messy, less confusing, and can take substantially less time if followed with consistency, commitment, and above all else, gentleness (even if it's done part-time). Thanks to rediscovering our ancestors' (and round-the-world neighbors') ways, we can help our babies sooner than when the toddler says, "I'm ready" (which would only, *really*, benefit the diaper companies).

NOTE: If you also have a toddler in diapers (18 months and up) who isn't potty trained yet, get that sorted before starting EC with your baby. Potty training is preferable to EC at this older age, in honor of the child and where he's at developmentally. See Appendix 4 for my potty training book, and when you're finished training your older child, have her help you EC your new baby.

WHAT EC IS NOT

EC is not coercive. It is not punitive. There should be no shaming, pressure, competition, showing off, or rushing the process. EC is completely in line with babies' natural interests, needs, capabilities, preferred hygiene, and general well-being.

EC is not "training" your baby. EC is about *helping* her meet her instinctual needs for cleanliness and dryness.

EC is not "parent training." Babies cry to communicate a need they are having in the moment. In fact, it's their primary way to communicate. EC is another form of *responsive* parenting.

EC is not hovering over your baby all day long, waiting for him to urinate. It is, however, about helping him go when the time comes and finding a balance with pottying, feeding, sleep, and play.

EC is not a chore, it's a lifestyle. It's not a fad, it's a different perspective, established in countless communities across the world for all of human history.

EC is not fixing something that's broken, it's about *not* disturbing the natural process in the first place so that no fixing (conventional potty training) is necessary later.

PHILOSOPHY

EC is rooted in an instinctual flow of communication and an ancient philosophy.

WHY EC WORKS

EC works because it's a process based on evolutionary instinct and a natural flow of communication. EC works because parents are following the cues arising from the baby's natural flow of instincts and urgent needs. It works because it's a natural phenomenon rooted in 100,000s of years of instinctual expression.

EC works because babies are fully formed humans, they need to go just like we do, and just like us, they don't want to soil themselves. They are not born incontinent, contrary to popular belief. It works because

babies are born open to absorbing our social conditioning, whether that's "pee in this diaper" or "pee in the sink" (the latter of which happens to more align with their instincts to not soil themselves, us, or their bed).

Just like we teach our babies how to eat with a fork and sleep in a bed, we can teach them to go in the toilet, as early as birth. It is a *choice.* EC works because of the parents' choice to make EC a household practice (whether it's once a day or all day long). The parents' commitment is key regardless of whether they do it part-time or full-time.

Here's how one of our Certified Coaches, Kate Falk, describes EC to parents in her town:

When people ask, "What exactly is EC?", I say, "Picture how you would potty a child in a third-world country where you do not have access to disposables or a washing machine. (This relates a bit more to me because my children LOVE to potty outside!) You would pick a potty place/s. You would "listen" to the baby's cues and respond." This response then inspires the follow-up question: "How do you know when your baby needs to potty?" My response asks him/her to compare a baby's need to his/her own need to eliminate: "Do you potty when you wake up?" YES. "Do you poop after drinking a warm beverage?" YES. "Do you potty when getting out of the car after a long trip? Do you potty at transitions?" YES. YES. Thus, via comparisons, the questioning adult understands that a baby's potty needs are very similar to his/her own.

When you say it this way, EC becomes a very reasonable, logical choice, doesn't it?

Social Conditioning

Many new parents find it disheartening when they cannot decode 1/3 to 1/2 of their newborn baby's cries and fussiness. Most do not know that the majority of these unexplainable pleas for help are rooted in the need to pee; not that they have a wet diaper and need it changed, but

that they *feel the need to pee* and need assistance to do it somewhere sanitary. A common response from parents who learn about this later on is, *"Ohhh, I wish I'd known that before. It makes so much sense now why she cried so much."*

Alas, the baby will override his instincts if the parent does not listen and socializes him to "hush little baby" and "pee in your diaper (and on yourself, and in your bed in this diaper) as I soothe you, it's okay." Over time, social conditioning causes the baby to conform to her parents' wishes. This is how we've done it for the past 60-200 years of commercial diaper use (starting with cloth 200 years ago, disposables 60 years ago). We've been taught to teach our babies to use a diaper instead of a toilet.

ECers hear the meaning within these mysterious cries for help. They honor their baby's instinct for dryness and desire for good hygiene. They say "It's okay to need what you need, and I will try my best to provide it for you when you need it." They don't necessarily do it all the time; many ECers do it part-time. But that they're *aware of* and *attempting to respond to* elimination needs is unique.

ECing parents are not by any means better than those who do not EC (especially given that most people don't even know it exists!), it's just a completely different paradigm, viewpoint, and perspective from which to connect more deeply and work symbiotically with your baby.

Why ECing In Modern Society May Be More Difficult and Take Longer Than in Indigenous Communities

Many folks wonder: *Why might it take 12-24 months to complete potty independence by ECing in the Western world when it only takes 6-12 months to reach toileting independence in indigenous communities?*

Some people assume that if you do EC, your baby will be toilet independent when the indigenous babies are. This may occasionally happen, but generally, this is not the case. Here are a few theories

(mine and others' that I've collected) on why it may be more challenging to do EC in Western countries.

First, in America, we not only teach the baby the *location* of where to go potty (in the bathroom), but we add the detail of *in which receptacle* they must go. Giant toilets are not accessible to crawling infants, nor newly toddling ones, so we make tiny toilets and then teach babies to use bigger ones when they can. This complicates things and takes a bit longer.

Further, the problem with the receptacle we teach our children to use is that it requires a *sitting* position. In indigenous cultures, babies (and grown-ups) squat to pee or poop. There's something in our wiring, in our instincts, and even in our physiological make-up that determines the natural position for pottying is **the squat**. Our babies are not naked, outdoors, and squatting. They are requested to potty sitting down on a toilet like civilized people do.

Second, on the note of nakedness, the other block here is that our babies wear clothes whereas many in indigenous societies do not. Babies generally can't remove their own pants and underwear (in time anyway) without help until around 24 months, average. The fact that our babies wear clothing definitely delays the completion of total toilet independence.

Third, in Western society we generally live one family to a household, and most adults work at least part time (the majority full time). We don't have aunties, uncles, and older children picking up on signals from the baby she needs to potty. For one caretaker to do the majority of the pottying for one baby (or more) – that is quite a lot of work and attention! Supported by an entire community, EC would be a breeze (and so would everything else regarding parenting).

Next, indigenous people hold the unconscious and non-emotional *expectation* of a smooth toilet independence journey. There is no misplaced pressure, anxiety, confusion, doubt, or judgment around how/when/if the baby potties. They matter-of-factly take care of business and seem to instinctually know what to do, and how.

Last, with a community that is steeped in tradition, the learning of generations of wisdom happens by *living in it.* No one needs to learn a technique or read a parenting (or EC) book or attend a class. You grow up "knowing" it all, and that knowledge is invisibly passed down as one of the norms of your culture. How much easier would EC be if we didn't have to wrap our Western brains around it? What if it was just our nature (like it was for all our ancient ancestors)?

In summary, if babies were raised in the Western world wearing minimal clothing and could potty outside at any time in a squatting position, EC would be easier and graduation would happen consistently by the time baby crawled or walked. Potty pauses would be avoided. Add in the support of a community of helpers and the wisdom of ages passed down via tradition, and Westerners would certainly join the other 50% of the world whose children are currently potty independent by age 1.

A Balinese Example from Jean Liedloff, Author of the Continuum Concept

"Then he gave signs of wanting to pee. He wasn't wearing diapers. The parents told him to go to the edge of the floor (there was no wall on that side) to go — and the child went by himself, relieved himself over the edge and came back. There was no sharpness. It was just, 'This is

where you go.' It wasn't angry or punishing and it wasn't permissive. It was the third way — to give the child the information about what to do, because that is what social beings want to know."
-Jean Liedloff, author of *The Continuum Concept*, from an article at continuum-concept.org titled *"Back to Bali,"* 1992

The Continuum Concept, EC, & Child-centeredness

The book *The Continuum Concept*, by Jean Liedloff, eloquently illustrates how the Yequana people, Stone Age Indians residing deep in the forests of South America, raise their children, emphasizing that what we *expect* of our little ones determines much of what they do and how they behave. If we expect them to fall, they do as we expected. If we expect them to potty outside, they do. For the Yequana, it's not an emotional battle *against* children for anything, it's a totally non-adversarial lifestyle.

You'll recall that Jean recommends strongly against a child-centered rearing in her book. She goes to much length to prove that child-centeredness leads to rebellion, to a baby who is constantly (& loudly) signaling the caregiver to "give me the correct experience, show me how to be an adult!" Child-centeredness produces a super-grumpy child.

She recommends going on with your life as you did before having your baby, doing grown-up stuff while wearing your baby so he can witness and begin learning what it will take to be a grown-up and contribute to the society he was born into.

While doing all this grown-up stuff (shopping, laundry, cooking, walking, socializing, using the toilet, gardening, etc.), you remain receptive to the signals that your baby (in his little baby carrier, held close to your body) is constantly giving off. This builds your intuition, connection, and awareness, but not at the expense of irritating your child.

Jean mentioned that if you sit around and stare at your baby all day, asking him what he wants to do (instead of showing him what "we"

do), he will become agitated and start signaling for correction. He is not signaling for more playtime with you, or because he's a "terrible two" or toddler, or because he's a willful, deviant troublemaker; it's because he wants you to show him something interesting by doing something interesting.

Within this setting, babies are softer, calmer, and happier. When parents EC their babies in countries where the continuum (nature's plan) is honored, they do so matter-of-factly: "This is where we pee. I believe you need to go, so if you do, go here."

The book also mentions that babies crave *information*. So, we can apply this to EC by providing our children with information about where we expect them to potty. We don't plead, we don't persuade or coerce, we don't force; these are all what Jean calls *adversarial* styles of parenting. We align ourselves with the fact that our babies wish to keep themselves, us, and their dens dry, and we assist them in going when they tell us they need to go (or when it's "time" per the 4 Roads to Potty Time or one of the 4 Easy Catches).

Jean recommends not being permissive, so when baby pees on the floor, we express our dismay but do not direct it at the child. We matter-of-factly tell them this is not the place to go; that over there is. We clean it up (often with baby's help) without anger towards them. We continue to love the child, but we do not pretend to love the displeasing act. We teach them about right and wrong by reacting to things that displease us in an *authentic* manner.

Jean believed our babies are innately social and that we should expect them to do the right thing, to want to participate and cooperate with us. We don't have to convince them, we just believe. They are born social, and the book states we mold them into becoming antisocial by our expectations that they will be bad, terrible twos, and other examples of "trouble."

By giving babies information about living (and pottying) instead of trying to force, please, or question them about what they want to do today, we give them the opportunity to happily contribute to the

society they were born into. We pee in the potty. That's just what we do.

A Summary of How this Philosophy Applies to EC:

- Don't hover over your baby all day long waiting for her to signal
- Go forth with your life, showing her what it is to be a grown-up from her "right" seat in the carrier, close to your heart, until she's able to move about on her own
- Be diffusely aware of her pottying signals and needs without hyper-focusing on her as the center of attention
- Teach her about life, and pottying, by modeling it in your day-to-day activities and giving her matter-of-fact information
- Do not coerce, plead, or punish; instead, help her do what humans are expected to do: pee/poop in the appropriate place
- Let the mobile baby go along with his whims and explore, keeping an ear out for the signal, intuition, or time to go without imposing upon his deep exploration of his surroundings; pause play to pee, and use a backup when appropriate
- Have an "open-door" policy in your family bathroom so your baby can get hands-on, eyes-on experience of what is expected of her in the grown-up landscape.

DISCOVER MORE: If you're interested in learning more about The Continuum Concept, visit continuum-concept.org or get a copy of the book.

VOCABULARY

As with many unique things, EC has its own native vocabulary. Below are 15 of the most common terms you'll hear tossed around in our community.

MISS

In conventional Western potty training, if a baby doesn't go in the potty, it's called an "accident." In EC vocabulary, this changes to a "miss." Basically, you both have missed the opportunity to potty. It's not a mistake; nothing bad has happened (as "accident" infers). You just missed the communication coming to you, or missed the timing or signal, or didn't respond quickly enough. Your baby missed the opportunity to ask to go. You've missed each other.

> ***Examples:***
> "We've had several misses this morning because he is peeing every 10 minutes!"
> "While I write this book, I ironically have more misses than when I'm not writing about EC."

What to do? Ask yourself what you've learned from this particular experience, forgive yourself (if you're hard on yourself), and move on with a smile. A "miss" is simply information.

CATCH

Another EC term is "catch." If you "catch" a pee or poop that means that you've successfully helped your baby go to the bathroom. You've "caught" the pee or poop.

> **Example**:
> "We caught a big poop first thing this morning!"

This doesn't imply that EC is about catching, it's just a term that folks have adopted to explain the opposite of a miss. It is not advisable to

keep count of your "catch rate." It is more important to celebrate successes and see your catches as a blessing.

Mis-guess

A mis-guess happens when you believe your baby has to pee, take her to the potty, position and cue, and she tells you she didn't have to go this time.

> **Example:**
> "I thought she had to go, but I must have mis-guessed again."

Mis-guesses are valuable because they hone your awareness of baby's actual signals and timing, and they can clue you in to when her patterns are changing. As with a miss, ask yourself what you've learned from the situation, shake it off, and move forward with some new information! And remember that you did nothing "wrong" by offering the potty to a baby who didn't need to go. You are doing your very best. We all mis-guess, and we learn from it.

Pre-Pee

Sometimes your baby lets a little pee out when she's trying to hold it while you get her to the potty place. This is called a pre-pee. If you find her diaper or undies to be wet while you're en route to the potty place, she may still have to go. Offer her the potty despite the wetness, as this may have just been a pre-pee.

Peenie-weenie

Some people call the erection that a boy gets when he's about to pee a "peenie-weenie." Whatever you call it, it's true that most boys get a little hard-on right before peeing. Observe a newborn boy and see that it's a fact (but prepare yourself for a spray!). The erection possibly gives baby something more substantial to hold on to and aim once he's standing and walking, and it can help you aim when pointing-and-shooting, in-arms, with your younger baby. PS – Some boys also tug on their peenie-weenie prior to peeing.

Pottytunity

Throughout your day, you will offer your baby many "opportunities to potty," otherwise known as "pottytunities." Pottytunities can be given based on the 4 Roads to Potty Time: baby's Signals, Transition Times, your baby's Natural Timing, and Your Intuition. They also include the 4 Easy Catches (wake-up, poops, diaper changes, ins and outs). Other pottytunities are before a bath, 10 minutes after breastfeeding and then 20 minutes after that, when your baby squirms in bed, when your baby suddenly becomes fussy, when you have a thought he may need to pee, etc.

Signal

A signal is your baby's movement, body language, or noise that indicates she needs to go potty. Some babies stop signaling at certain developmental stages and pick it back up at a later time, often in a different way.

Cue

A cue is the noise you choose to make that tells your baby he can release his bladder and/or bowels if he has any pee or poop ready. You establish your particular cue during the early days of observation when you cue along with every pee or poop as it happens (sound association). This can also be a word and/or sign language, depending on baby's age and your preference.

Generic Timing

Generic Timing refers to common times that most babies need to pee or poop. Examples include at a diaper change, upon waking, and when taken out of the car seat. Also called "Transition Times."

Natural Timing

Besides the more generic times that most babies need to go, your baby's pottying also follows a baby-specific, more personal pattern.

Examples of natural timing are that your baby poops every morning at 6am, or that she pees 10 minutes after every feeding. This timing changes over time.

Intuition

Intuition can be a thought, emotion, physical sensation, hunch, or mental picture telling you that your baby needs to potty. Intuition can also be a counterintuitive thought that says, "he can't possibly need to go again."

Potty Pause

A potty pause happens when your baby refuses to potty and/or you experience several misses for an expanded period, such as several days or weeks of misses in the midst of a fairly regular, predictable pottying routine. It's typical for a potty pause to last over 2 weeks. See Potty Pauses for more information.

Graduation

Some ECers have lessened their use of this term because "communication" is the goal of EC, not "completion," but you still may hear the term. Graduation means that your baby has completed the EC learning and is now potty independent. Baby is officially out of diapers in the daytime for daytime graduation, nighttime for nighttime graduation.

The exact definition for graduation can range from "always tells me she needs to pee and rarely has a miss" to "can take himself to the potty, pull down his pants, and wipe himself when he's finished." You can guess that "graduation" can be a confusing concept.

I'll leave out all the phases and stages of gradhood that I used to toss around. Although the terms may help you gather an identity within this process, they sometimes make you feel defeated, like you're never going to be done, instead of appreciating exactly where you are.

My take is this: even with conventional toilet training, accidents happen after the child is pretty much "done." These usually occur during growth spurts, teething, illness, or major family or developmental transitions. These accidents are a form of communication about the overall wellness of a child, believe it or not.

You will know when you're "graduated" – you won't think about pottying for 4 hours straight and then your child will ask to go, or you'll prompt him when you see his peepee dance. **That's when you know you're done.** You'll still be needed for the occasional prompt, and to wipe, and maybe to assist with pants, but otherwise, it'll be pretty clear when all this "clicks" and the hard work is mostly done!

If you, like many ECing parents, need help wrapping up the EC process at 14-18 months, please see The Building Blocks of Potty Independence section for guidance. I've listed other resources at the end of that section as well – lots of graduation options!

Late Starter (5-12 months)

"Late Starter" is what it's called when you begin EC with a baby who is 5-12 months old. It is referred to as "late" because the process begins *after* the first, most opportune window of starting EC (0-4 months) has closed. I don't call it this anymore because it makes you feel like a loser! **You're not late. You're here now. Whatever.** So, I've since renamed "Late Starter," "Starting EC Older."

If you are starting EC at this age (which most of you are!), please see the Mobile Baby and Young Toddler Modifications and Maintenance section for additional tips on how to begin EC in this age range.

Early Start Potty Training (12+ months)

The late starters' EC groups say that beginning potty learning *after* the age of 12 months should no longer be called "EC" because the child is so developmentally different from a 5-12 month old. The process of potty learning after 12 months is equally different. Therefore, at 12+

months it's not called "Late Starter EC" anymore, it's called "Early Start Potty Training" because you're starting conventional potty training *early*. I don't really think it matters what you call it, though. What matters is what you do and how you do it, and anything before 18 months is called "EC" in my book. I've shared this term with you here in case you hear a conflicting opinion out there on the Internet.

The philosophy, principles, and processes of EC shared in this book apply to children beyond 12 months old (up to 18 months), you just may need to modify some obvious details. Know that non-coercive, gentle listening and responding can be practiced with every child. And, it's interesting to note that the Montessori "sensitive period" for easy potty learning is 12-18 months (beginning and completing within this absorbent timeframe). It is a very common age to dive into, and complete, elimination communication!

If you are starting EC at this age, see the steps in the Mobile Baby and Young Toddler Modifications and Maintenance section of this book.

When to Begin EC

The first, advantageous window for beginning EC is early. It's best to prepare for EC when you're pregnant. However, there is no definite cut-off to beginning and you can start (with some modifications) at any age.

If you can start within the first 4 months of your child's life, it will be easier for you to integrate EC into your relationship. You will enter your rhythm together more naturally during this fresh time of hormone-enticed deep connection, resonance, and intuition. Your baby will not have been conditioned to go in a diaper and ignore her instincts for dryness. You may achieve faster and better results.

(In my opinion, starting at Day 1 of baby's life is extremely helpful – you create solid rhythms and commitment from the beginning, and never get used to any other way. If you can, start at birth or soon after.)

As compared to other potty training methods, this one *must* begin early. There is no waiting for signs of 'readiness' or the ability to self-train. *Babies are born ready,* and EC takes advantage of that. However, people start at various times for different reasons. Wherever you are, here you start!

When your baby is born, you may feel overwhelmed at the newness of so many little things, and the incredible amount of energy required, so if you're not committed to starting in some small way, EC will fall through the cracks. Avoid this by entering into birth prepared to respond to your baby's needs and cries in this additional way. (Remember, you can do it part-time, with any type of diaper back-up, and you can start small.)

NOTE: If you're beyond that first window, do not sweat it! 0-4 months is the "first optimum" age range, but you can begin at any age up to 18 months. You'll just do it differently.

RESOURCE: The best way to start EC with a brand-new, newborn baby is with this book you've got in your hands PLUS my minicourse, Baby Meets Potty. It has several video examples of pottying my babies as early as the first hour of life, and a separate way to start EC with a newborn not found in this book. For ages 0-12 weeks. See Appendix 4.

What "Starting Early" Can Involve

Your baby asks for food on day one. Your baby asks for warmth on day one. Your baby asks for comfort on day one. Your baby asks for sleep on day one. She also asks for assistance keeping the bed, herself, and you dry, and maintaining good hygiene, on day one.

Starting at this time is similar to starting breastfeeding at this time. Although it may be a bumpy road, it's about *beginning* to listen. *Committing* to listen. To support a little being do what he can't do by himself.

"But I just had a baby and am recovering (maybe painfully) myself!"

Well, perhaps you didn't know this, but *you do not have to physically take your child to the bathroom on day one, or even know how. And you don't have to do it 24/7.* What I am saying is that a commitment to connecting with your baby on this level is totally possible from day one, as is starting the observation and cue cycles. And a big tip: start by making the paradigm shift that the diaper you're using is not a full-time toilet – it is a "back-up," a tool to use when you've missed one another or are not actively focusing on EC.

This early attention lays the foundation for the ongoing commitment that EC requires of parents. Starting on day one, even in a tiny way, can help keep you from putting off EC until it's less opportune to start. And you're sitting around staring at your beautiful new baby all day long anyway, right?

BEGINNER'S TIP: Try pottying your brand-new, newborn baby right when she wakes up. Hold her over a top hat potty or the sink in either Classic EC Position or Cradled Classic EC Position and make the "pssss" sound. See what happens!

What If You Think You Can't Start Early? You Can.

If you are physically unable to bring your baby to potty in the beginning, *you can still begin ECing in other ways during the first days.* You can start right away with re-envisioning the diaper as a "back-up," not a toilet. Then move into the 4 Easy Catches. Then, the Basics Part 1 where you will learn to notice his signals and cue along with him when he goes. By the time you are well enough to take him, you will be more in tune than if you start later, and your baby will already trust you in this way.

If you have other people helping you recover, consider asking them to help EC your baby with you part of the time. Especially for those with traumatic birth experiences and/or physical handicaps, community support in ECing is so important. (And by the way – dads can learn EC and have a role in the postpartum that makes them feel valued and respected within the new family – see my Dad's Guide on the Book Owners Website.)

Remember: if you put it off because you're telling yourself that you're not well enough to potty him, you may miss the first window of opportunity. You **can** begin by observing, learning, and cueing without having to physically take him to potty.

YES
YOU
CAN.

I believe in you! (And, once you start, you'll realize how much easier EC is than changing newborn blowout diapers... just sayin'.)

DO I HAVE TO DO EC 24/7?

No. You can do EC as often as you like, or as little as you are able. Many people do it part-time and experience wonderful success. EC is mutually flexible and can fit any family's philosophy and work-life balance. Even stay-at-home parents sometimes do EC part-time. It's totally up to you. See the special section of this book called Part-time EC.

BUT WHAT IF MY BABY DOESN'T "ASK" ME TO GO?

If baby, for whatever reason, doesn't give signals or "ask" to potty directly, parents can anticipate that baby may need to go and can successfully EC solely based on their baby's natural timing and certain times of the daily routine that are opportune for pottying (generic timing or "pottytunities") and intuition!! It works. So many people in our community do EC very well without receiving a direct signal from baby, so do not give up. See the 4 Easy Catches (Part 1, Step 5) for some easy pottytunity ideas.

A GENTLE COMMITMENT

As with everything as new parents, pressuring yourself to be "perfect" is a sure setup for feeling like a total failure. Your commitment involves listening, responding when you can, and connecting with your baby. Mostly, it involves being open to learning each other. Think of this type

of commitment as smooth, cyclical, fluid, gentle, and flexible, not goal-oriented, linear, firm, ambitious, or tenacious. Do your best. Love yourself and your baby. Flow with change. Keep it light. And while being light, truly commit to helping her do what she can't do for herself:

Eat. Stay warm. Relax. Potty in an appropriate place.

A Trial Period...

I recommend trying EC (giving it your "all" for at least a month, whether it's part-time or full-time) and seeing if it's for you. Pause when you feel like it's not right for you. Stop when you know it's just not working out.

If you become angry, resentful, forceful, or just plain stressed out about ECing, notice that and find someone supportive to talk to right away. Visit us on our private support group in our Book Owners Website or find a local GDF Coach (see Appendix 3). We are here for you! At the very least, if things get bumpy just take a break for a few days and focus on connecting with and having fun with your baby & your family.

Ultimately, if you're unable to find peace or a rhythm within the EC process, you may simply do early potty training (with my other book) at 16-18 months – lots of parents choose this as a second option and there is absolutely no shame in making this decision!

Set Yourself Up for Success

Give yourself & your baby every chance for success:

- Start early if you can (during the first 0-4 months, if not on the first day in little ways).
- Stay calm and curious.
- Do only as much as you are able and/or willing to do.
- Seek support and guidance if/when things become challenging.

What to Expect (Outcomes)

If you were wondering, starting on day one does *not* guarantee early potty independence. However, most people find that their babies "graduate" EC sooner than they would have completed (or even started) conventional potty training. Every baby has her own unique developmental rhythm and temperament. Remember that we're not doing EC in an intact community where early potty independence is the expected norm, and everyone helps out. We are doing it within the context of modern society, and usually on our own.

That said, let's chat about the possible outcomes.

If you're wondering when ECers generally graduate from diapers, it can range between 6 and 24 months depending on your definition (ranging from the ability to potty on cue to total potty independence), while some say you can expect reasonable daytime independence between 9-20 months. In any case, the average completion age by conventional toilet training methods is 36-38 months, so even the later end of EC graduation (20-24 months) is considered "early!"

Note that accidents (misses) DO happen even with a potty-trained child! So, that doesn't mean you're not graduated. The need to prompt your child when she's distractable will continue much into the early childhood years. It's just your job to take the slack when things are busy and remind her. (You'll probably prompt her to use the bathroom when she is a teenager before a road trip. Just sayin'!)

All said, it's safe to shoot for 14-18 months as a loose target. It takes up to 14-18 months for the brain to retain all this stuff anyway.

So that's completion, but the diapers *can* go away sooner. Besides the final graduation, folks typically ditch daytime diapers between 9-14 months (after walking mastery), nighttime between 14-36 months.

Just remember, completion is not the goal, communication is. But even with learning to read, we do expect them to, someday, be done, and so we need to gently give them the tools to get there, yeah?

An Encouraging Note for Those Starting Older (5 Months +)

If you've gotten this far and are super-bummed that you may have missed that first opportune window, please don't fret!
If you cannot start until month 5, 6, 8, 11, or 16, **go for it!** It will be different and unique, perhaps challenging in ways. However, some babies respond well to beginning EC at a later age. New windows of opportunity open at various stages along the way. Many of those started older even complete sooner (not that that's our goal)!

For more in-depth help starting EC with ages 5 months and up, please see my detailed Mobile Baby and Young Toddler Modifications and Maintenance section for a comprehensive how-to.

Why Is It Possibly A Challenge to Start Older?

Well, by this time:

- baby has been conditioned to potty in his diaper
- baby has lost sensitivity to his inborn instincts for him, his caregivers, and his bed to remain dry and clean
- baby has lost awareness of the act of eliminating (i.e., this came out of my body and made me wet?)
- control over the associated potty muscles that have been working since birth has not been encouraged or necessary
- baby becomes used to feeling wet
- parents aren't aware of or in tune with his rhythms and (sometimes subtle) signals, as these mysterious signals have simply been piled into the category of "unexplained fussiness"
- parents may have difficulty picking up on these signals, if the baby is still signaling at all
- and, developmentally the baby is now more interested in crawling/walking/talking than pottying.

IF you can help it and have enough notice when reading this book, start before these challenges get a chance to settle in. If not, don't sweat it! They are easily tackled, just start *today*.

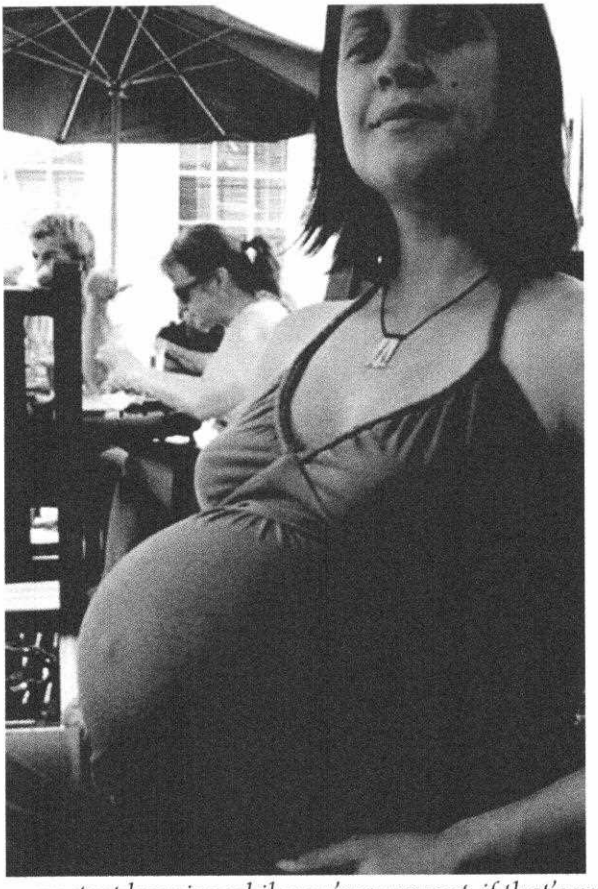
Reasons Parents Don't Start Early

Some common reasons parents don't begin EC during this prime window are that they:

- weren't aware that EC existed!
- feel too overwhelmed with a new baby to do something as foreign as EC
- don't know exactly how to start ECing
- can't find clear instruction
- don't realize that researching potty training can happen before birth, not after the toddling begins
- don't have access to proper support or guidance
- have a toddler running around (usually in diapers or potty training) too, or multiple children
- feel skeptical or doubtful that it will work for them
- tell themselves "it can wait" or "there are more important things to attend to right now"
- aren't informed that babies will lose sensitivity even after a few months
- figure "Why bother? I'm going back to work soon anyway."
- are afraid to handle their baby in this mysterious way
- are physically recovering from birth (the Mamas), coupled with the belief that they can't begin ECing unless they can carry the baby to the potty
- are confused or intimidated by the size or complexity of the EC how-to information out there (physical books and/or websites)
- don't have time to read another book
- are pressured by skeptical friends and family to not try something so "weird" that "could damage the baby" (it can't)
- or even feel embarrassed to be the only one they know doing EC.

These reasons are based on valid feelings, realities, and beliefs, yet many are easily overcome with the right guidance. Absent encouragement, the above reasons have become blocks for many parents. Because of these blocks, some parents wait until they feel "ready" to begin ECing, usually not until anywhere from 6 to 16 months. Most parents honestly say they wish they hadn't waited.

If you are pregnant or your baby is 0-4 months old and you are telling yourself any of the above reasons, please try to give EC a start, even in a small way, and know that you're not alone. Many have been there & we believe in you.



You can start learning while you're pregnant, if that's you!

Keys to EC

Be Gentle & Non-coercive

EC is rooted in a natural process. Mothers across millennia have pottied their babies from birth. There is no coercion necessary, no star system, points, or M&M's to be earned, no forcing or pressuring necessary to potty your baby. EC is gentle and non-coercive.

If you find yourself stressed and getting frustrated, please know that all parents become overwhelmed, tired, and upset at times, and we all need support. Call a friend, post on our EC support group, lighten up on the EC for a while. Remember what EC is all about:

Communication – Listening – Responding Gently & Promptly –
Sharing the Experience of Connection!

Get Support

If you've decided to do EC in a Western country, such as the US, some would say you're facing an uphill battle. You probably don't live in a village of extended family who practically live in your kitchen. You probably don't know many people who practice EC. Those who do know that you potty your baby might even think you're crazy, seeing EC as impossible, not at all practical, potentially harmful, or absolutely ludicrous. Not helpful!

In other countries, parents have the benefit of 1,000s of years of tradition preparing them for their own children's birth and care, close-knit community to help and support, and the cultural normalcy of infant pottying on their side. Given these realities, EC in the Western world will be less challenging for you if you enlist the support of others. Please find support in our Private Support Group!

Let Go of Goals & Agendas

Counting down the days until your target age of potty independence arrives can backfire if it's the *focus* of your EC practice. The pressure of

an agenda may cause power struggles and stress. It's okay to know that you will, and should, be done someday (it's only healthy!), and to shoot for a certain timeframe or age, but don't let that be your prime motivator. It's also okay to wrap up EC with potty training if you've reached a point when you are ready to be done with EC. Get equipped and take action. Just don't start EC with the pressure of an inflexible agenda.

For example, your child will master reading someday. You don't dive into the process pressuring your child to read by next week! Remember, the "C" in EC stands for "Communication," not "Completion."

Focus on Connection

If you focus on the Connection, you will feel happier, and so will your baby. If you hyper-focus on the EC, you will likely become disconnected from one another. If you instead continually renew and refresh your connection with each other, the pottying will naturally fall into place. Zoom out and relax – this time passes quickly.

Equally, connect with yourself and take care of your own needs as a parent. A happy parent is a connected parent.

It's a Team Effort

The whole concept of EC stems from the baby's instincts to not soil himself, you, or his bed, and to not have to sit in filth on any of these. The key here is to remember: your baby needs you to help her go potty in the correct place until she can do it by herself. You are her partner in meeting her needs and answering her requests, just like you do for feeding, sleep, love, and warmth.

If baby stops asking you to go potty altogether or starts asking in a different way, follow his lead. Listen. Respond creatively. Make a suggestion. Adjust something for both of you. Be a team player! If he's too distracted to tell you he needs to go, you'll pick up the slack and prompt him when it's time to go (as a team!). If his communications are too subtle for you to see, hear, or sense, trust in his natural timing to guide you (and the transition times you learned in those 4 Easy Catches).

When you realize something needs to change (such as transitioning to the big toilet), guide your baby and lead the way. As she will try to tell you (in some way) when she is hungry or sleepy, she will also try to tell you when she needs, or wants, to potty (be it body language, fussiness, stillness, delayed urgent requests, etc.). Your baby will also indicate when things need to change (such as resisting you as her way of seeking privacy). Your job is to figure out what she's saying, respond, and work as a team with your baby.

Any way you slice it, EC is a team effort.

Baby Will Start to Hold It, Consolidate, & Wait

As time goes on, you will notice that you don't have to be quite so quick at offering the potty. When the newborn asks to be picked up, she can not wait for it, but after a few months, she can wait a little longer. Likewise with pottying she will wait a little longer as time goes on.

Simultaneous to building trust in your responsiveness, and becoming patient, her muscles will also become stronger, and she'll be able to wait longer and longer (especially as her bladder grows). Babies have control over their sphincters at birth. The time they can hold it expands as they grow.

Another cool thing that happens as baby gets older is that she will lump her numerous pees into consolidated pees, hence transforming two smaller pees into one larger one (especially if she is engaged in a social setting).

Consistency Builds Trust

As I've said, if you consistently (say, minimum, once a day) respond to your baby's signals to potty, he will trust you. When you consistently answer cries/requests for food, getting picked up, warmth, and comfort, the trust between you strengthens. He feels less anxious, less need to cry in an extreme manner, and more ease around life in general. Every cry has value. Your responsiveness to those cries, and your consistency, builds trust.

Trust Builds Ease, Making Future Disciplining Easier, Too

When you answer baby's primary form of communication (cries), it builds trust that her needs will be met. This trust lends a sense of ease to your relationship. The baby doesn't have to stress out wondering if you are coming or if she needs to try to figure it out for herself. Or worse yet, the baby doesn't have to shut off all communication and become passive.

Answering baby's signals (including those for pottying) will also make future disciplining (teaching and setting healthy boundaries) easier because baby will trust you on a very deep level. No one wants to follow someone he or she does not trust. Pretty simple.

Let Go of Perfection

EC is not about perfection or catching every single pee and poop. It's about communication and enjoying your connection, helping your baby retain his inherent sensitivity, and working with him as his loyal teammate. (And, you will never be the perfect parent, either. Parenting is a perfectly imperfect job!)

Make It Fun

Lighten up, stressy-pants. This is about communication and lessening frustration and maintaining your baby's inborn sensitivity and instincts – it's not supposed to be a drag. The more *fun* you have doing it *together*, the more pleasant the whole transformation to potty independence will be! Besides, life should be fun, right?

When It's Gross

Sometimes you'll get peed on. Sometimes you'll get pooped on. If you weren't ECing, I guarantee this would happen to you anyway. But since you are, take the opportunity to model that peeing and pooping are natural and normal, not gross like our society teaches us to believe. And did you know that baby pee is actually *sterile* when it comes out?

Instead of saying "ewwww!" about your baby's natural functions, causing shame, you can model **acceptance**. Everybody poops. Everybody

pees. (And, if there is pee *everywhere*, please read the section on doing naked time responsibly.)

Learning Opportunities

All aspects of parenting can become vehicles for learning. While ECing, you can reframe misses & mis-guesses as precious opportunities to learn about your unique baby and your teamwork together. If you notice you feel bad when you miss or mis-guess your baby's cue (like I do sometimes when I'm checking my phone instead of being present), simply say aloud, "Now what did Mommy/Daddy learn from this?"

And then answer yourself. For example: "Well, Mommy/Daddy learned that in the morning, if baby has not pooped yet (as he does regularly), we should respond immediately to his cues and get him to the potty instead of checking social media." Say it kindly. This models for your baby that it's okay to make mistakes, and how to forgive oneself.

Choosing The Middle Way

Some parents hyper-focus on EC to everyone's detriment. Others are completely flakey, inconsistent, and loosey-goosey about EC, which can become confusing to the baby. Any extreme position lacks the resiliency, flexibility, creativity, & open-mindedness needed to have success with EC. Try choosing The Middle Way.

Benefits of EC

What's in it for you, your baby, and our world? Here are the top reasons parents do Elimination Communication with their babies.

Over 25 Benefits of Doing EC

Use Fewer Diapers

Some people EC completely diaper-free from the get-go. Those who use diapers may use the same disposable or cloth diaper for hours on end, or all day. In contrast, the same people on another day may go

through an absurd number of diapers because their baby won't tolerate wetness and they're having a number of misses (for whatever reason).

However, being completely finished with diapers by 12-18 months instead of the average age of 3 (or even 4 or 5) years old can save you so many diapers.

Save Money

If you use fewer disposable diapers, you will save money. If you wash fewer cloth diapers, you will save money. Simple enough. Over the course of 5 babies, I'd estimate that I've saved over $10,000 in diaper costs. (What if we all put that money into a college fund instead?)

Oh, and if you EC using my Quick EC Diaper method (see How to Diaper with EC), you'll need less gear and will save even more money. You're welcome.

Pave the Way to Easier Potty Independence

Ultimately, if you maintain your baby's instinct to not soil herself, you, or her bed, and as a by-product, build trust with her by showing her you'll take her to potty when she asks, your ultimate goal of a potty-independent child will be more easily & quickly within reach. When it comes time for total potty independence, your teamwork will have paid off and the final stages will be smoother.

If you teach her to go in the diaper as her primary toilet, you will then get the honor of teaching her that, oops, she shouldn't go in the diaper, but in the potty instead. That would obviously make potty training necessary, and harder. More confusing. A royal struggle.

Don't get me wrong here, doing EC in modern society does not necessarily *guarantee* early potty independence. Every baby develops uniquely, at her own pace. We also lack the community support that indigenous tribes are blessed with, where everyone pitches in and early potty independence is just the norm. However, many babies finish earlier with EC than if conventionally potty trained.

(Although I've helped many, many parents potty train their toddlers with my other book, I have never had to potty train any of my 5 babies – they were all out of daytime diapers around walking, as early as 9 months. Each was "potty trained" in a third of the time of the national average of 3 years old.)

Deepen Connection

Dr. Sears, pediatrician, author, and Attachment Parenting (AP) guru, teaches parents to believe in the language value of baby's cries. Each cry is a cue, a communication. When we look at it this way, we see that babies are constantly communicating. When you answer a cue, you build trust with each other and deepen your connection. Enhancing your connection with your baby early-on will pay off like any good investment. EC is just one more way to respond, build trust, and enhance that precious parent-child connection. In this way, EC aligns with AP principles.

One hundred percent of ECers in our community say that doing EC has helped them deepen their connection with baby.

Save Time

Depending on how you dress your baby (is she wearing 5 onesies or perhaps an easy-off pair of pants and long socks?), ECing actually saves time compared to traditional diaper-changing (and bottom cleaning) routines. If you set yourself up for success by making it easy to quickly remove and replace clothing (if any), and if you catch those obvious "I need to poop" signs and thus avoid a blowout in the diaper (and, yes, all over the baby and his clothes), you will save time.

Lessen Mess

If you've ever cleaned the rear end of a newborn baby who's just pooped, you know just what I'm talking about. I can not guarantee you will rid yourself of poopy diapers forever; however, most ECing families joyfully avoid the *majority* of them. Most parents can tell when their

baby is pooping – that obvious face or stare. The odds of catching poops are on your side. When you get good at catching poops, you'll save yourself the gross work of cleaning up blowout diapers.

EC lessens mess beyond the bum. It's more hygienic for baby, household, and parents, too. Many ECing parents don't own a smelly diaper pail (I've never owned one) and find it easier to clean up after baby in these ways. And boy do their babies smell GREAT.

You might think that by doing EC you'll get peed and pooped on more often. My friends who diaper their babes report they get dirty just as often as I do. And I have to mention that cleaning up *little* newborn and *tiny* baby messes is way better than cleaning up BIG toddler messes. They just make bigger, messier, smellier waste. Let's not go there. And if your child is pooping in the toilet by 12-18 months, you won't have to go there at all!

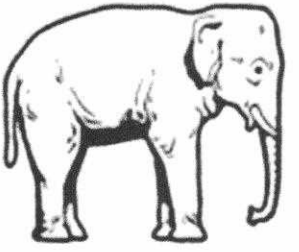
Reduce Environmental Impact

Per Wikipedia, 27.4 billion diapers are buried in US landfills *every year*, making them the third-largest single consumer item in the landfills. It's estimated that they take 250-500 years to decompose, but no one really knows for sure. Since they were brought to market in 1961, every single disposable diaper that's ever been thrown away still lies exactly where it was buried, full of waste, practically intact. Yuck.

Add in the amount of water and detergent used to wash cloth diapers every year, the petroleum to run diaper service delivery trucks, plus the chemicals, water, and petroleum used to manufacture all types of diapers and the associated diaper industry must-haves, like disposable pull-ups and intricate stuff made of plastic, and you've got a big environmental problem.

By reducing the number of any kind of diaper you use over the potty learning life of your child (by reaching potty independence sooner and lessening or eliminating your day-to-day use of diapers), you directly affect the environment. By choosing EC, you make a difference.

So, you might be wondering what 27.4 billion diapers look like. Well, they weigh about 3.4 million tons, which equals about 3.4 million Volkswagen Beetle cars or about 485,714 gigantic, 7-ton, 14,000-pound African savannah elephants – the world's largest land mammal times 1/2 million...



1/2 million of these...
Each. Year. Into. Landfills.
In the United States, alone.
(Did I mention that none have
ever biodegraded?)

Help with Breastfeeding

Did you know that babies typically "pop off" the breast or bottle when they need to pee or poop? It's hard to eat and potty at the same time. Unfortunately, many women (and lactation consultants) incorrectly interpret this popping off as a sign of over-supply, overactive letdown, or low milk supply, some serious breastfeeding problems. This misinterpretation could be contributing to the misdiagnosis of lactation issues when the core of the popping off could be just a simple signal that baby wants to go potty somewhere other than your lap!

Additionally, some moms stop the feeding when baby pops off and miss the opportunity to fully nourish baby. You may have better success at giving your baby a full tummy if you pause to potty, then resume the feeding.

Explain Some "Unexplained Fussiness" & Colic

When my first baby was fussy as a newborn, 9 times out of 10 he was telling us he needed to potty. Boy, did I learn fast. If I didn't know about my baby's natural ability to communicate about his need to potty in an appropriate place, I would never have unraveled the mysterious, and otherwise totally unexplainable, Mr. Fussypants moments – and there were a lot of them. Some babies are labeled "colicky" when really, they are just being persistent and adamant about telling you they don't want to go on themselves, you, or their bed. Perhaps they are vehemently protesting the diaper itself. Somewhere between 1/3 and 1/2 of babies' cries and fussiness actually mean "I don't want to wet or soil myself. Please help."

(PS – If your baby's fussiness is *not* helped by EC, do a little research and rule-out tongue-ties and lipties - we had both with baby #5 and resolving the ties solved her fussiness beyond what EC could do. Practically overnight, she transformed from fussy-baby-around-the-clock to a totally content, "colic-free" baby with less gas, less discomfort, and way more joy. Plus, we caught even more pees once that extra layer of fussiness subsided.)

Avoid Diaper Rash

With EC, the baby doesn't become accustomed to going in the diaper and sitting in moisture and feces all day, and thus diaper rash and other infections caused by unsanitary stuff on the skin are less likely. Whether you use disposables or cloth diapers, if you practice EC along with drying any wet areas prior to replacing the diaper, you will likely avoid diaper rash altogether. So many do, yours truly included. 5 babies – zero diaper rash.

Also, diaper-free time (time spent without a diaper – in underwear, pants, or naked – which is recommended intermittently whether ECing full- or part-time) helps air out the bum and can help quickly resolve diaper rash and/or the yeast that causes it (sometimes putting a cloth diaper back on continues the yeast growth). Diaper-free time is a time

to heal. Add in treatment with copious amounts of the magical cream I recommend in our Supply List and, problem solved. Skip the diaper rash problem altogether by practicing EC.

Avoid Constipation

Babies have more difficulty pooping (and strain much more) while lying in a horizontal position (I mean, can *you* poop lying down?). The most-commonly-used "Classic EC Position" actually helps your baby have a bowel movement by putting her in a deep squat which shortens the length of the outward-bound pipes. It also gently presses on the bladder to help the peeing happen.

Many countries across the world do not use Western-style toilets and experience much easier movements, as children and as adults, because they are squatting. The classic EC position is a "deep squat." Coincidentally, our body's elimination systems were designed to work well with that squat.

NOTE: Some solely breastfed babies poop about 10 times a day, while others only poop every 8 days, and they're both considered normal! Sometimes the babe isn't constipated but needs every bit of nutritional input to grow and yields no waste for a while. You'll get more in touch with all this when you practice EC. However, if your baby has a fever or other symptoms during a bout of constipation, see your pediatrician.

Reduce Frustration

The baby cries and you try to unravel exactly what he is asking for. Is he hungry? Tired? Cold? Hot? Teething? Does he need to pee? Figuring out the meaning of just one of these various cues can save your baby (and you) a ton of pre-verbal frustration.

"Oh, that's the noise he makes when he is about to pee. Got it."

As time goes on, baby trusts you know what he needs and trusts that you will help him. As a result, his cries become less intense, quieter, mellower.

Using EC is also less frustrating for the child versus conventional toilet training, which can be very confusing after years of dependence on diapers. Now that I mention it, conventional toilet training is also frustrating for the parent!

Get to Know Your Baby & His Body

If you know your baby intimately in as many ways as possible, your knowledge will give you incredible gifts down the line. Knowing what goes in and what comes out, when and how often, has big benefits. By ECing, you will become more in-tune with any upcoming illnesses & developmental milestones, possible nutrition/allergy/breastmilk supply issues, and the personality development taking place in your child. Some ECing parents have even detected urinary tract infections (UTIs) in their babies earlier than they otherwise would have. One mother discovered she (the mother) has a heart condition because of the way her baby suddenly reacted to being pottied. Bottom line: doing EC gets you in touch with your baby's body so you know what is normal and what is not, and it gets you deeply in touch with one another.

Baby Gets in Touch with His Own Body

Babies also get the opportunity to explore their own bodies when they are diaper-free. Especially the private parts. This helps baby develop a healthy sexual identity and perspective. It prevents the development of shame around her genitals and, ultimately, her sexuality. Many children have come to believe that their private parts are "gross" or "dirty," the source of these thoughts being years of wearing their toilet over that area.

ECing parents rarely look or act disgusted when pottying their baby (unlike the looks on the faces of those who regularly clean poopy toddler diapers). Many are comfortable giving diaper-free time and allowing their babies to explore and experience the freedom and goodness of their own bodies.

A bit of trivia: baby boys (circumcised or not) have the instinct to frequently tug on their penises, which apparently helps loosen and stretch the foreskin in a natural, gentle way (whether they still have foreskin or not). Girls explore and tug too, but for different reasons.

Improve Communication

As you learn your baby's cues and respond to them, your shared communication loop improves. EC adds another opportunity to build good communication skills as the baby receives confirmation that what he expresses has value and deserves a reply, encouraging him to communicate more. Throw baby sign language into the mix and enjoy the budding conversations!

Build Self-Esteem

ECed babies feel good about themselves because when they cry out for help, their parents respond and try to help them. This makes babies feel valuable, that they belong in the world and are worthwhile. ECing parents feel good about themselves because they are experiencing the joy of connecting with their babies more often than if they didn't EC (and usually, more deeply). And a toddler who isn't relegated to soiling himself and who owns the natural processes of his body is one self-confident fella!

See that Bare Baby Bottom More Often

Who doesn't want to see (and squeeze) an adorable, clean, beautiful bare baby bottom more often?! My favorite benefit of doing EC is that I get to see my baby's naked bum a lot of the time, and it's soft, healthy, and smells so good. I can't imagine life without seeing it all the time. But remember - do naked time responsibly by reading that section of this book!

Have More Fun

EC can be quite fun. Making faces in the mirror as she pees into the sink. Singing potty songs as you sit on each of your potties together. Going in nature, together – how exciting! Babies follow us around,

wanting to learn how to be a grown-up human. When we engage in this activity together and build a connection on this level, parents and baby all have more fun.

And Yet Some More Benefits...

- Explain mysterious sleep issues (babies often wake and then need to pee before returning to sleep, or can't settle back to sleep in a wet diaper)
- Travel lighter (you won't need all those bulky diapering supplies, but you might need a portable potty!)
- Lessen future discipline challenges
- Increase mobility, motor skills, and the possibility of earlier self-dressing
- Improve the smell of baby and home
- Decrease power struggles & diaper-changing struggles
- Understand and mitigate some hyperactive behavior (earlier potty independence is said to "normalize" behavior)
- Teach child to "let go" versus "hold it."

Overall, EC Supports...

Good health, good hygiene, breastfeeding, Attachment Parenting, Continuum Concept parenting, child's development, caregivers' development & intuition, better sibling relationships, happier babies & parents, a different perspective of babies and cultures, and positive relationships.

Chapter 4: Troubleshooting

Potty Pauses

Potty pauses, when they happen, can tremendously discourage a family whose EC journey has been relatively smooth going. Here's more about them and what to do.

Defined (Again)

A potty pause happens when your baby refuses to potty and you experience several misses for an expanded period. For example, if all is going well for 6 months and then suddenly you have 2 weeks straight of missing *everything*, or your baby straight-up refuses to go for days on end, you may be experiencing a potty pause.

Many differing views about potty pauses exist, including the possible causes. Let's explore various solutions and even the belief they don't exist at all. Pauses commonly happen between 7-18 months (around the time when mobile indigenous babies would likely not need our help anymore – more on that in a bit).

Possible Reasons for Potty Pauses

Some reasons for potty pauses may be that baby is about to hit a developmental milestone (crawling, walking, talking, etc.), she is teething, she is sick, she is undergoing a growth spurt, she has a food intolerance or allergy, or she is distracted by her budding awareness of the world.

Some also believe that baby is testing her own limits, and that "potty pauses" are just part of the learning process. They are not necessarily a *failure* in EC, per se, but a sign that your baby is [healthily] becoming aware of her ability to hold it, let it go where she wishes, and decide whether to go at all. Independence, ability, and decision-making in action! (See Article below for the whole theory.)

Some babies pause their pottying patterns because of their caregiver's energy around pottying, whether the parent is hovering or hyper-

focusing on pottying, feels stressed or pressured around pottying, anxious or frustrated, babies pick up on it and can respond by pausing. Check in with your own stress level and energy around pottying. You might have to dig deep to find out what you're emitting.

In my experience with our online community, *potty-centeredness in the parent* is the top cause for a potty pause. Other babies pause because of a big lifestyle shift in the family: travel, divorce, moving, job loss, parental discord, parent(s) working overtime, etc.

Last, a possibility I often ponder is that Western babies will suddenly resist the usual potty routine because they are not raised in intact communities where:

- there are many examples of older children pottying in appropriate places,
- infant pottying is a cultural "norm," and therefore the learning is embedded (and expected) in their culture,
- everyone helps out, so the baby gets handled by a variety of people, keeping it interesting,
- babies can generally take themselves to potty outside at an early age (crawling), thus empowering them with age-appropriate autonomy, so they have nothing to rebel against,
- once babies are walking, they have little use for an adult's help with the process,
- babies are not the center of attention but are rather engaged in age-appropriate learning at all times, and are therefore more content, and
- they do not need to learn how to use or sit on a toilet; they get to squat in a comfortable position in a general area outside, not stuck trying to figure out how to independently use a strange contraption (and they probably don't have to deal with clothing).

I wonder if any of the above contributes to babies in our culture pausing or stopping the use of the potty after many months of success? I'm eager to find out more! In any event, let's get you through one.

How to Get Through a Potty Pause

Although it may not be pleasant to be in the middle of a Potty Pause (in conventional potty training, it's called a Potty Strike), know that you're not alone. Here are some suggestions that experienced ECers report have helped them get through potty pauses:

1. Focus on being a happy & peaceful parent for the moment. Reconnect with your baby, removing your focus on EC for now. Take a nap with your baby, read books together, put her in the baby carrier and wear her around the neighborhood, sing to her. Connect!

"When I'm connected to my baby, EC naturally falls into place. When I'm hyper-focused on EC, we're not connected at all."

2. Back off. You might be focusing entirely too much on pottying. See #1. Offer fewer pottytunities. Your baby is more than just a peeing & pooping machine. (However, back off *without stopping* – continue to do at least the "morning pee" or "poop" easy catches, even if they don't result in a catch.)

3. Teach a new skill. Your baby may lack one of the pieces she needs to feel ownership over this process. See "the Building Blocks to Potty Independence" in this book.

4. Wait it out. Remember, "this too shall pass." Usually, after a few days of *whatever* (your baby's experimentation or developmental milestone), babies go back into signaling and willingly potty full force, sometimes even better than before.

5. Continue to prompt your baby to go. Don't just stop ECing suddenly, even as you're backing off. Try to address or support the developmental milestone or teething or chaos in the home, *and* as you "zoom out" from your potty focus, continue to offer when appropriate and at the most obvious times (like after a nap). Pottying follows mood, so support your baby through the change, when needed, and it will pass.

6. Gently experiment with different locations, environments, receptacles, positions, and/or cue noises. Get creative. Sometimes it's just a simple fix; your baby's pottying preferences may be what's shifting. Change it up and see what happens. Often, switching to the big toilet (with a seat reducer or not) and changing your cue from sounds to words is all it takes.

7. Seek support. Come to the Private Support Group (gain access at godiaperfree.com/ECowners) and tell us what's going on. So many parents don't ask for help. Whatever you need, seek it out.

8. Be easy on yourself. The pressure you put on yourself or your baby during these times will just make it worse. Be gentle, inside and out.

9. Don't take it personally. It isn't your fault. You did nothing wrong – something's simply out of balance. Never blame yourself. Your baby is communicating something by pausing. Try to distance yourself from the problem and observe it from afar, non-emotionally, perhaps supported by a friend or your partner. ZOOM OUT!

10. When you find yourself totally frustrated, notice *I'm frustrated*, take a deep breath, and regain your center. Remember the long-term goals around your connection with your baby. This is a tiny sliver of time as compared to a lifetime with her!

11. Avoid coercion, punishment, anger directed at your baby, and general upset. They don't help. Take care of yourself so you don't go to these extremes. When you do feel negative emotions (we all do sometimes!), breath deeply and take a moment to regain your center.

12. Laugh often and stop measuring things! It's just a potty pause. Be happy that your baby even potties at all! Most of all: stop counting your miss:catch rate. Got you, didn't I? Instead: grateful smile. :o)

13. Do a re-set. Sometimes you need a complete reboot. Learn how to do a re-set in the Troubleshooting section.

14. Wrap it up (the whole thing!). Sometimes a pause means it's time to ditch daytime diapers and fully hand off the baton (especially after 11 months old). You can halt a pause completely by wrapping up EC with the "Building Blocks to Potty Independence" section, by taking my Wrapping Up EC minicourse, or by potty training with my other book – The Tiny Potty Training Book. See Appendix 4.

TAKE A DEEP DIVE: I created a video minicourse called Potty Pause Resolution for those of you who may need more handholding on your way through a potty pause. See Appendix 4.

An Alternative View on Potty Pauses - Just Part of the Learning Process

Below you'll find an article written by Kerste Conner, long time DiaperFreeBaby Mentor in Seattle, WA. Enjoy this fascinating and mind-opening discourse on the other possible meanings of a potty pause.

EC Phases

"I've noticed that there seem to be two times in a child's life with EC when problems arise. And I think that during both of these times, it is frustrating for the adults involved (and also for the child involved, but they can't tell you clearly) and with life being busy, it is easy to decide to put the diapers back on and wait until things improve. However, it would be better to continue doing what you are doing – this time of discord is very important to the process and even though there may be more misses, this is a time of great strides for a child.

When your child begins to walk or talk, they stumble and stutter and make mistakes. You wouldn't see your child struggling to walk and then think – she's not ready to walk yet (cuz she isn't perfect at it yet), so I am going to confine her to a safe environment where she cannot walk and I will keep her there until she is ready to walk. Instead you do what you can to keep her safe while she stumbles and falls and learns to

teeter and totter and finally eventually walk. She fails while she is learning and as parents we tolerate these failures because we know it is part of the learning process.

However, when it comes to the EC process and we've been having success, somehow as our child begins to learn that they are a part of the process and they can control both when and where they potty, parents become confused – why is there now failure when before there was so much success?

I think what we fail to realize is that our measure of success needs to change at this point.

Children learn how long they can hold the contents of their bladder by holding it so long, they can't hold it any longer.

They are in touch with the elimination process, they know what it feels like when their bladder is full, but what they don't know is – how long can I wait before it is too late? They get involved with other activities and they don't want to stop, even if they have that full bladder feeling. They may be involved in this experimentation process when, based on timing or intuition, an adult decides to potty the child – who protests vehemently. Then as soon as you take the child off the potty, they realize that they have exceeded their potty-holding limit and they pee on the floor. The adult reaction is frustration – why is this happening? But in fact, the learning process is happening. And this is a great time to continue your communication with your child – "Oh, you are peeing. Next time, if you let me know, I can help you put it in the potty." Very low key.

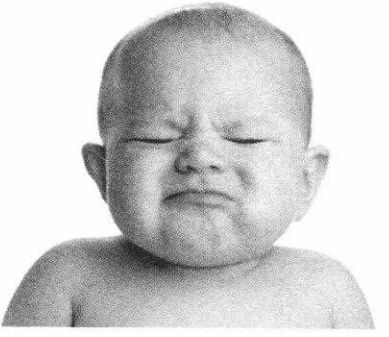
So my theory is that this part of the learning process happens sometime between 7 and 12 months. What we did during this time was try a few different locations (mini potty, then sink with mirror, regular toilet with insert, then outdoors). We were trying to distract her from her bladder holding experiment long enough for her to pee. If she peed, great, if not, we used either diaper back up, or we put her on some sort of

impervious surface, or lived dangerously, knowing that we'd be cleaning up a miss in the near future. Sometimes she surprised us and held it much longer than we suspected that she could – and we both learned. Sometimes she peed almost as soon as we let her go back to her chosen activity – and we both learned. The process smoothed back out again for a time, but our success rate was probably never as high as it had been before our daughter learned that she could delay the inevitable, if it suited her.

Then between 12 and 16 months, the misses begin to increase again and for us this was the real key to our daughter graduating. She became very resistant to us ECing based on timing (which we had done from birth with her). Although we had been signing with her and talking with her about elimination throughout our journey, at this stage she was really acting out that she wanted control over this part of her life. It resulted in quite a few misses, but instead of diapering her back up and waiting until later when we thought she was ready, we gave her MORE control, instead of less. We would ask her if she had to potty (when we thought she should have to go, or if we were heading out for a trip) and if she gave us a negative response, we would believe her (even if we were skeptical) – we allowed her the ability to have confidence in knowing her body. Even if, sometimes, it turned out that she was wrong, the amount of time that it took her to realize that this was her thing and we were no longer the ones in control of where and when she pottied... she was completely diaper free within one month, and about two and half months later, she is completely miss free.

I'm not saying that this timetable will apply to everyone. My point is just this: When a child who is on the EC journey has a series of misses, instead of considering it a "potty pause" maybe consider it as part of the process and that the child is really expressing that they realize they are part of this process and support that, instead of backing off and diapering them up and waiting – sending them mixed signals that they aren't trusted to learn this skill because it is simply too messy."

Thank you, Kerste, for your awesome article and your heartfelt contribution to the world of EC!



Sometimes it's just time for the older baby to have more control... to be given more of the responsibility and the building blocks toward independence.

A final note: When he seems to be asking for more control (through pausing!), you can show him how to sit on the potty, how to wash his hands, how to bring himself to the potty, and grant him more autonomy by teaching the basic potty tasks in the Building Blocks to Potty Independence section.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Sorting out the kinks! This section may seem redundant here and there, and even as compared to the rest of this book, but that's on purpose. You see, many of the solutions I list here can solve a variety of challenges. If your question is not answered on the next several pages, hop on over to our Private Support Group (Appendix 3) to get some support, or see the *expanded* Troubleshooting Section on the Book Owners Website (Appendix 2).

Here are answers to the top EC questions and challenges.

OUR EC HAS STOPPED WORKING

Baby stops signaling, you miss nearly every potty throughout the day, diapers are piling up, or things just aren't working anymore.

What to do?

1. Back off a bit, while staying consistent. You are probably being potty-centered (we all do it) and causing unconscious pressure. Offer fewer pottytunities and connect more in other ways.
2. Focus on connecting with your baby and on nurturing yourself. A happy, connected parent makes EC flow more smoothly.
3. Remember that the learning curve is NOT straight. It is mysterious and ambiguous. Gently stay the course.
4. Experiment with new positions, environments, receptacles, and cues.
5. Review The Basics Part 1 and learn your baby's updated, current natural timing. (Just don't over-do naked time.)
6. Wear your baby more often to bring you closer to your baby's needs.
7. Check in with yourself. Are you too busy? Have you begun to tune baby out? Are you still present and listening or have other things taken your attention? Are you getting enough rest? Are you stressed?
8. Sing, take deep breaths, and help baby (and yourself) relax while pottying.
9. Read the special section called Potty Pauses for info on EC breaks that are many weeks long.
10. Check your clothing & diapering strategies and see if they support EC like you want them to or if they need tweaking...see the sections called How to Diaper with EC, Do I Have to Do Away With Diapers?, and the Supply List (Appendix 1) for more ideas.
11. Hop on our private book owners support group...tell your peers and our coaches what's going on and ask for suggestions (see Appendix 2).
12. Realize that babies are constantly morphing, learning, exploring, growing, and experimenting. Trust that your baby will get back on track in her own way and on her own timetable. Gather information, relax, and don't worry.
13. Give your baby privacy if things stop working. You can turn your back, busy yourself with something else, or leave the room if baby is safely on the potty. Often this will get things back on track.

My Younger Baby Cries Every Time I EC

Babies rarely cry *because* you are helping them go potty against their will, but rather because the act of peeing or pooping is unfamiliar, or the position is uncomfortable. Remember that your newborn has been in the womb for 9 months and hasn't felt that strange new sensation. It can be plain weird for the first few months. Babies also sometimes cry during pottying because they feel uncomfortable, unsteady, or cold in the position you have them in.

Solutions?

1. Find a better position that baby can relax in. Try the Cradled Classic EC Position instead of just the Classic. See the Positions Gallery in this book for position alternatives. Remember that preferences for certain positions usually change as baby grows older.
2. Soothe baby while holding him in position. Sing a soothing song (we like "Twinkle, Twinkle"). Run some water. Gently "shush-shush-shush" him and comfort him before, during, and after the pottytunity.
3. Try pottying baby lying on a waterproof pad. Cue along as she goes to build sound association. Transition to in-arms when baby grows past this phase (usually within weeks).

DISCOVER MORE: Podcast episode #43, Why Newborns Cry While Peeing, covers this topic a little more deeply. See Appendix 3.

My Older Baby Protests When I Offer a Pottytunity

Babies protest to get you to change *something*. Whether position, environment, "Hey, I don't need to go right now," or "I no longer need/want your help with this," here are some tips for dealing with protest:

1. Often, a little change of scenery or position helps baby release her bladder:
    - try a new position
    - try letting baby sit on the potty on her own (if she can)

- try a new environment (sometimes going outdoors helps - but don't make it a habit)
- try a new receptacle (i.e. switch from in-arms to mini potty, or mini potty to toilet seat reducer, or get a shorter mini potty, add a potty cozy, etc.).

2. If your baby is arching her back and straightening her legs, she may not need to go right now. Try again later. **Never force a baby to stay in any position.** You may also want to re-learn her Natural Timing (The Basics Part 1).
3. Developmentally, your baby may be interested in his new unfolding world and all the things he wants to explore. In this mindset, he is distracted by shiny objects and would rather investigate those than potty. Be patient. It'll pass. (And maybe bring that shiny object along on the potty trip.)
4. An older baby may realize that she can now decide when and where she goes. Be patient. She's experimenting. Try moving a mini potty to the living room to keep it accessible and "top of mind."
5. Try reducing your Timing-based potty offerings and allow your baby the space to look to you on his own accord when he needs help, instead of swooping him away from what he was engrossed in exploring when (unbeknownst to you) he was not ready to go yet. Remember that babies consolidate their pees and poops as they get older, holding it longer.
6. Do some naked teaching time. Let her go diaper-free for an hour or so to reconnect with the elimination process. When she starts to go in an undesirable place, gently airlift her to the potty while saying "wait" (you can alternatively move the potty to her and have her sit). When she's sitting on the pot say "pee in the potty" or "I need to pee Mama/Daddy." Do diaper-free time responsibly. (If you think *more* naked learning time would helpful, download the Hybrid Plan on the Book Owners Website for how to do 1-2 days of it – see Appendix 2.)
7. Let an older baby have more control over the process. Trust his growing intuition and bodily awareness. If he protests, tell him to tell you when he needs to go so you can help him.

8. After a protest (when you know she needs to go), briefly carry baby around, naked-bottomed, then nonchalantly try again either in the same receptacle or a different one, possibly running some water to relax and focus her.
9. Give your baby privacy if he protests the potty. You can turn your back, busy yourself with something else, or leave the room if baby is safely on the potty. Often this will give him a sense of control.

How Do I Aim This Thing? (Boys)

Here are some tips on aiming penises (for various ages), adapted from various Go Diaper Free community posts (and my own experience with 3 boys).

For photos of positions & methods that will help you aim your boy's penis, see the Positions Gallery.

Any Age

1. In the classic EC position, you can reach up between his legs with your index finger and physically help him direct his stream into the receptacle by pressing his penis *downward*.
2. Hold your baby in the classic EC position over a small potty between your thighs. Tip the potty towards you and lean slightly forward to aim your baby's penis downward into the potty.
3. Try to aim his body towards a larger receptacle (sink, toilet, bathtub, outdoors).
4. If you have some time to keep him diaper free for a while, his pee stream will be straighter, as opposed to having him squished up in a diaper where the stream will become more of a spray. It's also easier to tell if a boy needs to pee when he's diaper-free because you can see his "peenie-weenie" (tiny erection).
5. Face him towards the back of the toilet when holding him over the toilet or on a seat reducer.
6. Try the in-arms *standing* position at the sink, bathtub, or outdoors.
7. Potty outdoors, in any position.

8. Place a towel on the edge of the bathtub and hold the baby sitting on it. Cue him and the pee will end up in the bathtub and any spray will be soaked up by the towel.
9. Use a mat or washable rug under your potty receptacle or area to absorb sprays or spills.
10. Use a small bottle or jar as a receptacle, placed over/around the penis, catching all the spray.
11. Place your hand, palm facing baby, into the top hat potty to gently press the penis down (and know when he's gone!) – you will get peed on a little bit, but the good news is that it will all end up in the potty.

SITTING & OLDER BABIES

1. Invest in a short mini potty or toilet seat reducer with a good, tall lip ("splash guard").
2. Drape his lap with a prefold diaper or washrag while he sits on the potty.
3. Hold your hand over him, like a cup, to direct his stream from spraying (yes, you will get peed on... it's sterile!).
4. Help your baby lean forward on the potty/seat reducer to aim his penis downward. Sit him far enough back on the potty to have room for the pee stream to go into the potty.
5. Allow him to practice aiming through the natural exploration of his penis as he urinates.
6. Talk to your baby about the expectation of the pee going into the toilet or potty. "Point your penis in the potty. That's where the peepee goes."
7. Try holding your older baby in an "airplane" position over the toilet.
8. Let him practice aiming in the great outdoors (with Daddy or another boy demonstrating).
9. Try floating a piece of toilet paper, tissue paper, or an O-shaped piece of cereal in the toilet for your older baby to practice aiming (have him stand on a stool).
10. Use food coloring to color the toilet water and have him practice aiming while changing its color.
11. Get a mini toddler urinal and hang it on the wall in the bathroom at an appropriate height.

DISCOVER MORE: Listen to podcast #97 for more information on doing elimination communication with baby boys. See Appendix 3.

We're in Position & Cueing but Nothing is Happening

1. Try singing or deep breathing on baby's head. Sometimes baby is distracted or holding his sphincters and needs help relaxing or focusing.
2. Run the water if you are pottying at or near the sink.
3. Give baby a potty-time-only toy to play with while sitting on her mini potty.
4. Try a different environment, position, or receptacle. If you can, go outside and squat with him.
5. Walk around with baby bare-bottomed for a few minutes, then try again in the same, or a different, receptacle.
6. If she arches her back and straightens her legs, she clearly doesn't want to go (whether she needs to, or it's time, or not) and it's best to wait a few minutes or wait until next time.
7. If he is really distracted and resists an in-arms pottytunity over the sink, try passing his foot through running water to both get his attention and stimulate him to pee.
8. Consider leaving her naked over a pad, or outdoors if she's walking, if you are certain she needs to go and you don't want to waste a diaper. Often, she will pee within moments of being set down.

My Baby Won't Signal (Or Suddenly Stopped Signaling)

Don't give up. It doesn't mean she doesn't get it or that EC won't work for you (or that you are a failure). It just means this one of the 4 Roads to Potty Time is not-so-dependable, and you, my dear parent, must utilize the other 3 Roads while providing repetition and consistency (without overdoing it). It's all good. Until your little darling starts signaling to you consistently, you'll still need to prompt her by reminding her it's time. If you stop prompting altogether, she won't ever pick signaling back up. How to prompt?

Instead of asking if she needs to go or expecting for her to Signal out of the blue (when you know she doesn't), you'll just take her. You will take over her (lack-of-)Signaling by Prompting her while you gently stay the course. Also, you'll want to teach *her* future signal to her by prompting her *with* what you eventually want her to say to you.

So, here's what this looks like:

You're enjoying your day, keeping an ear out for her nonverbal signals (that "peepee dance"). You're also loosely aware of her natural timing. And, you're incorporating generic timing as a natural rhythm to the day. Maybe you're focusing on the 4 Easy Catches. In any case, you know when it's time.

Then, you prompt by just taking her whilst saying what you want her to eventually say to you, such as "I need to pee" or "potty" (or signing by pointing to the bathroom – whatever communication ability your child has, meet her there). She'll eventually pick it up and realize that this is what we say when we need to go pee, and she will begin signaling eventually.

Remember that signaling is age- and stage-specific. Newborn babies pretty much all signal (because their primary signal is crying), and yet eventually this may dissipate as baby comes into being in the world. At older ages, some babies can verbally signal from 9 months with words, others are better with sign language, and still others are just late bloomers on the direct communication circuit and you'll have to count on other factors to get you through the vast majority of early toddlerhood. Honor your baby's different pace and model the desired result (the Signal) with consistency and patience.

AND about the prompt: Be brief (one word is fine), don't over-explain (or explain at all), don't get stressed, and don't expect her to EVER say it. *What!?!* Yes. Don't expect her to EVER say it. If she does, great. If she doesn't, whatever. The point is that she KNOWS in her tiny developing brain this word means "it's time to go." This is her future signal.

She gets that. She will adapt it as she wishes and will communicate it when her brain can do so (14-18 months is when the brain can do long-term repetitive memorized tasks consistently).

Usually, lack of signaling can cause an utter feeling of failure to arise in the parents, coupled by extreme potty-centeredness. These are reflexes but they won't help! What will? Patience, consistency, and repetitive prompting without overdoing it or becoming potty-centered. It's all a balance.

DISCOVER MORE: Watch my YouTube video – Signals 101 – and listen to podcast episodes #27, 47, and 80 to learn more about signals. See Appendix 3.

TAKE A DEEP DIVE: The Potty Time Master minicourse will help you know when to take your baby to the potty, signals or not. See Appendix 4.

I Am SO Frustrated! How Do I Deal with My Own Frustration?

Speaking of frustration...boy have I got stories. Everyone gets frustrated at some point. As parents, we all feel it from time to time. Sometimes, you *want* to your baby to cooperate already. And you may get upset when he pees on your couch or bed.

It's totally natural to feel that way, especially when you want cleanliness, ease, and harmony in your home and with your baby. The key is to *notice your frustration* and *come back to center*, again and again. We will never be perfect, but we can always heighten our awareness and come back to our highest self – our center – when we notice that we've become frustrated.

How to relieve your frustration**?** Give your baby to someone or lay her in a safe space for a few moments and take some deep breaths. Check in with what you're needing or wanting right now, with how you're feeling. Give yourself some love and compassion.

Of course you feel that way right now.
Yes, you deserve what you need right now.

And then let it go with a big exhale and gather up that sweet little baby for some connection time. Get outside and let Mother Nature soothe you. Go out for some shopping therapy. Take a nap together. Take an hour off from EC and just relax.

Please let me remind you that parenting is often challenging (especially when you're doing it mostly alone). Find some community to help support you through your frustration. Hop on our support group and vent. Find a way to do something *for yourself* every day, even if that means just taking a bath without a baby for once.

Remember: EC isn't about perfection. It's about *being with what is*, responding to it, and doing your best with what you've got. (As with parenting, right?)

My Baby Refuses to Leave Playtime to Pee

Take that tractor, that doll, that Slinky, that block, with you. Instead of "let's go pee" or asking your child if they need to go, say, "I think the tractor needs to go peepee. Let's go see!" (Or just go, with toy and child, silently.)

Run, run, run (even if you are the only one running, while baby rides along) to the potty. And then have your young toddler "cue" the tractor over the potty (or demonstrate this for her), "psssss." Then confidently say "ok, your turn" or "the tractor wants you to pee, too" or "show that tractor how *you* go peepee."

RESOURCE: I have to mention I wrote my board book, *Tiny Potty*, to help with this process. It demonstrates the entire potty process – from awareness to going back to play – and features the baby bringing a potty companion with him/her: Bear! You can find the board book and the stuffed version of Bear at my other shop, Tiny Undies, if you think

this would help your child learn to leave playtime for potty time (then return to play). See Appendix 1.

My Child Withholds His Poop When I Take Him, or Stops Pooping and Won't Continue

If your (usually older) babe holds her poop when transported during or right before you know she's going to poop, try one of the below:

1. Try returning to the in-arms EC Classic Position over the big toilet to see if the deep squat position helps it come out. Placing a small mirror on the back of the toilet can help you see if the sphincter is opening and closing, which is a good sign that poop is forthcoming. You can also do this over your sink if your back needs a break and use the same mirror trick if your mirror doesn't go low enough for you to see what's coming out (you would scoop the poop out and into the toilet when you're finished, and sanitize the sink, of course). Either toilet or sink, run some water to encourage relaxation. Grunt gently. If it looks like it hurts (constipation), soothe your baby and encourage her to stick with it, or try a baby constipation remedy and keep an eye out for poop signals later on.
2. If #1 isn't an option, bring her to the potty and put a short stack of books under her feet...enough to shorten the passageways a bit and create a deeper squat, since a deeper squat always helps! And be prepared to read, too. It couldn't have gotten too far back up that canal. It's gonna come out, just wait a sec and read and relax her, grunting intermittently if that feels right to you.
3. Invest in a very short mini potty – like the one I carry on tinyundies.com. Sometimes this one small adjustment solves EVERYTHING.
4. When you see him get into position and start to get quiet, pick him up, take bottoms off, and walk for about a minute or so with baby bare-bottomed, in a relaxed and calm manner. Make your way over to the potty. Sit him down on it and sit next to him on

the floor, making the cue noise you've been practicing (grunting "mm, mm") or saying nothing, even averting your eyes if you choose (some prefer more privacy). Breathe deeply. Get calm and relaxed yourself. If he doesn't go for it right away, walk him around a bit more. If he insists on running around free, keep an eye on him and pay attention to any second attempt to poop on your floor or in his pants. Then transport him again. Eventually he'll get the message.

5. Give privacy. Babies want privacy at much earlier ages than you'd think. Close the door with both of you in the bathroom. Set your child on the potty and immediately turn your back, "busying" yourself with something else in the room (I like to pick at the grout between the tiles, my back turned to baby). If your child is safe on the toilet reducer, and older, consider stepping out of the bathroom to quickly retrieve something you've "forgotten," or stand behind the door, out of sight, listening for baby to go. Make safe choices, obviously, while trying to give privacy by averting your eyes, ignoring him, or stepping out/away.

I'm Catching All the Poops, But Not Many of the Pees

You're not the only one!! Babies pee so often between ages 0 to 18 months you might miss a bunch, and it's not a big deal. Some babies begin pee consolidation at 3-4 months, some after crawling or walking. Some don't mind being wet, some hate being wet. **The big picture:** over time, baby will consolidate pees, pee more quantity/less frequently, and will care about being wet. Someday.

We always go for every other pee (they sometimes pee every 15 minutes for goodness' sake!). If my first baby peed in the diaper back-up without telling me, he'd most definitely tell me the next time *beforehand*...so we'd get half. Then we'd get less! Then we'd get more again. *I can safely say there is no real predictable expectation I can give you about pee catches.* Every baby is so different, even my five as compared to one other. In case you're wondering what happened for us, eventually all 5 of our babies were consistently signaling, and all pees

How Do I Get My Baby to Stop Peeing on the Floor?

A horrible side effect of some of the EC information out there is that lots of babies are stuck in a rut about peeing on the floor. It's become habit. And why? Well, one, because other books contain outdated advice and, two, because "diaper-free" is often misinterpreted as "naked bottomed."

So...that history aside, if your baby is hooked on peeing on the floor, this is how to remedy it:

1. Start by using a back-up and/or clothing during all the awake hours. Swallow any pride about having a "diaper-less baby" and remember that "diaper-free" means free from *exclusive dependence upon* diapers. Using a diaper as a back-up is legit if you still practice the EC part of it. Using trainers or undies or just-pants all count as diaper-free time, too. Stop that nakey time. Except...
2. Do a full-on naked teaching day for one to two days, max. During this naked day transport your baby to the potty every time she pees or bring the potty to her and have her sit on it. Turn your computer, phone, and social media OFF. Play with your babe but don't hover. When that pee comes out, gently say "wait" or "stop" and transport, mid-pee, to the potty saying, "pee goes in the potty now" or "pee in potty." Unemotionally. Learn more by downloading and doing the Hybrid Plan from the Book Owners Website (see Appendix 2).
3. In the morning say "You're wearing __ (pants/trainers/etc) ____ today and I'd like them to stay dry. Tell Mommy/Daddy when you need to pee and I'll help you." Or just say, "Keep pants dry."
4. You can do a re-set, using the diaper as a tool, if you need a break to recalibrate yourself. Learn more at the end of the Mobile Baby and Young Toddler Modifications and Maintenance section.
5. Don't allow your child to pee on the floor anymore. "Pee goes in the potty now." And teach her by doing what you say, meaning what you do. This is the first opportunity you'll get to practice "discipline" with your baby, and it's a very healthy step! Discipline is not a bad word – it is teaching and setting

were consistently caught, by about 15-22 months old – no matter how we got there. Since the process is so non-linear, my biggest advice is just to stick with what you're doing and trust that everything will work out in the end (it always does).

Additionally, here are some more ideas for you to catch more pees:

1. For your sanity, first, do not strive for perfection. Let that crazy idealization go right this instant. Stop counting your catch vs. miss rates! Especially with pee.
2. Keep her in some sort of clothing or back-up during times of numerous pee misses. Remember "diaper-free" doesn't mean "naked and peeing everywhere." You're still communicating, right?
3. When babies are bored, they pee more. This is moreso when they get into the crawling/toddling stages. When engaged, especially with other children, they hold it more. Please don't take this as advice to spend all your time playing with your child. As I've mentioned, child-centeredness can annoy a baby. Use your judgment. Other kids are usually much more interesting to them, as are walks in nature and outings.
4. As EC becomes his normal routine, and if you use a back-up, he will prefer to be drier and will hold it more. Things definitely change over time, partially due to maturation and growth, and also depending on what's going on in his immediate environment.
5. You gotta let a few happen. You aren't teaching her to pee in her diaper. You will likely get a better pee signal if you let her pee in her diaper the first time and if she doesn't tell you about it, the next time she needs to go she *will* tell you because she doesn't want to double-wet it. And she won't want you hovering over her all day, so holding it becomes a grand idea. I don't mean to stop offering, or to forego the best pottytunities. Just lay off a bit and offer half as much. Maybe rely on the 4 Easy Catches and such. Trust in the process.
6. Last, if you ARE taking him all day long, he WILL pee all day long. Take him LESS.

boundaries, which creates a safe space where your baby can freely explore.

My Baby Will Not Sit on the Potty Any More / Long Enough to Go

As a first option, try this: when you take your child to the bathroom, close the door behind you, remove his pants, say "put your pee in that potty" and point, then pretend to do something else. Turn your back. He might just sit without all the attention on him when he truly can make the choice on his own. You can also switch to the big toilet on a seat reducer.

Otherwise, for poops, and even sometimes with pees, you may want to do what one of our Go Diaper Free community members shared that worked for her (and many others): snuggle your baby while gently holding her on there. When you get the signal or see the pee/poop dance, sit your baby down on the potty and say, "poop goes in the potty." If he tries to fuss out of it or stand up, hold him there in a snuggly warm hug, saying, "This is how poop goes where it belongs. Thank you for sitting." Stroke his back, get close, sing to him.

It's kinda like gently holding your flailing, screaming, rebelling child on the car seat as you strap her in while she's struggling like hell to get out. It is for her safety, and you are not hurting her. You are taking charge in a way that is caring, healthy, and necessary. Sometimes with pee and poop, it becomes the case of dire need. It is time. You *need* to sit for your hygiene, and your mental health.

I've tried this myself with success. Sometimes at night, when he was a young toddler, I had to hug my first baby boy (who was not-so-cuddly) to get him to stay and finish his business (pees). I only had to do it a few times to clearly, gently demonstrate that we are staying here until you're finished, and then he relaxed and went along with it from there onward.

For poop, the instinct IS stronger to sit and squat, so *trust* that your child, once directly encouraged, will get it and continue with consistency. If you need to show him how to get onto the potty, do so. Teach whatever physical part you think will help. Just get the message across gently, firmly, and consistently, knowing in your heart that it's best for him to pee and poop in the potty, not on the floor or in his pants. He will follow your lead.

If you can't get him to sit on the pot and pee, then catch that pee in *something*. My potty trainer friend likes to use a Red Solo Cup. Try it and see if he or she can pee in it instead. Works for some!

We Ditched the Diapers but He Keeps Wetting/Soiling his Undies/Pants!

Whether you are "starting EC older" or have been doing so from birth, when you ditch the diapers there can sometimes be a period of wetness that may have you doubting everything. First, I recommend a day or two of "naked teaching time." This is 1-2 days of pure naked time where you transport him to the potty (or the potty to him) every single time. See the Hybrid Plan download on the Book Owners Website for the details on doing this naked teaching time.

If this doesn't work, and baby is over 14 months old, a final Potty Training Experience may be the solution. Grab my other book and do the full training, start to finish – because you never know what may be missing! (See Appendix 4.)

If you have a younger child or are having extreme trouble with wet/soiled pants, then go back to using the diaper as a back-up and offering the potty at times that seem right: by the 4 Roads to Potty Time, the 4 Easy Catches, whatever works for you. Do NOT stop doing EC. Just use the diaper as a *tool* until there is more reliability (be it signals, timing, or intuition!).

Once your child becomes cooperative with this, and you guys hit a groove, and you as parent feel confident with it, then you can ditch the

diapers and have more success with the undies/pants. "Diaper-free" doesn't mean ditching diapers when diapers are still a potentially useful tool. EC can be done with a diaper back-up, and most often it is. The vast majority of ECers do it with a diaper back-up and have success. Just be sure to not use diapers beyond 14-18 months during awake time. See the section When to Ditch the Diapers to learn more.

One of my readers' mothers is from India and reports they only move from the diapers of early months to tiny underwear when the child is somewhat reliable (with signals, timing, or intuition).

When starting EC older (with a 12-16 month toddler especially), I *highly* recommend doing the 1-2 days of naked teaching time – as taught in the Hybrid Plan found on the Book Owners Website (see Appendix 2). From that experience on, the pants and undies may become soiled or wet for a while, could even be a couple of weeks or months (remember, if less than 18 months, the brain has to catch up!), so use the "appropriate," corresponding back-up for YOUR nerves and stress level to be under control, while continuing to work the process.

When you have misses in pants or undies, LEARN SOMETHING from it and do NOT let your stress show. Communicate in simple short phrases. Have them help clean up instead of playing with the pee.

At 9 months, when he began walking and I became sick of the diapering struggle, my first son had wet undies for about 7 months! He eventually got it. During the Months of Endless Pee, we increased our catches as we taught him *more* parts of the process such as how to run over to the potty and how to sit on his own, yet most importantly we stayed *consistent.* It was better to wash countless undies than to use diapers, for us, but it wasn't easy. I had to keep my patience level in constant check.

DISCOVER MORE: Listen to podcast #37 – The poop enigma – for an example of what to do when a 20 month old starts pooping her pants out of nowhere. See Appendix 3.

My Child Totally Gets It ALL, but Keeps Peeing on the Floor

Time to stop talking so much. Plain and simple. She knows where pee and poop go. She knows how to ask you for help. She may even know how to get her pants down. When you over-talk, you leave no room for her thoughts and her ability to act on those thoughts. Plus, hearing it repeatedly will NOT help her. What will?

Use simple directives without a lot of explanation. "Time to pee." "Pee in potty." "Put your poop in the pot." Then be quiet to give your child room to process the information for herself. (And maybe teach some more skills in the section called The Building Blocks of Potty Independence.)

Another thing works for families whose child seems to "totally get it" but keeps having misses: a potty training experience. It doesn't mean that you're an EC failure to have to resort to a potty training experience! What it means is that something is missing in the process with this precocious child, and you're unlikely to figure out exactly what that is, so a potty training experience will help fill in the gaps for you. Follow my other book's potty training plan, start to finish, and I would bet that your child will stop peeing on the floor for good – see Appendix 4.

How Do I Complete EC? Or "My Child is Over 18 Months and I'm Ready to be Done!"

EC is wonderful. And amazing. And with toddlers over 18 months old, it becomes counterproductive if the ending steps aren't falling into place naturally. This is because they are developmentally in a different place now and need more firm closure to the process.

If that resonated with you and you've got an over-18 month old (or even a 15, 16, or 17 month old) and want to wrap up your EC practice, my instructions about how to place the Building Blocks of Potty

Independence didn't help, and my Wrapping Up EC minicourse didn't help, you may want to go get my other book on non-coercive potty training (see Appendix 4), which features an entire section dedicated to completing the process if you've done some level of EC with your child. (This doesn't exist elsewhere.) Most parents have success doing the entire potty training experience as if they've never done EC. It works.

My potty training method takes an average of 7 days to get over the hump (if your child is 18-20+ months). And if you want personal handholding, get on our private potty training support group. If you're ready to be done with EC, you can be. Without pressure, M&M's, or gimmicks. Yay! (And there is NO shame in it. People do it all in the time in our community and find a potty training wrap-up to be SUCH a gift.)

How Do I Know When to Say When?

If you're feeling like things just aren't working out, how do you know whether to persevere or throw in the towel? Let's talk about that right now.

Assess Your Experience

- Are you smoothly sailing?
- Are you loving the process and deepening your connection with your baby?
- Are you overwhelmed by new motherhood but enjoying giving EC a try anyway?
- Are you stressed more often than not?
- Are you feeling lost and not getting the hang of it?
- Are you just plain upset about pottying most of the time?
- Do you need more support?
- Are the misses so many that you doubt this will ever work for you?

Going Well?

If things are going relatively well and you're enjoying the process with your baby, continue forward.

A Bit Stressed or Stumped?

If you are a bit stressed or stumped and finding that you're frustrated more often than not...start over with The Basics and/or do the re-set found at the end of the Mobile Babies Tips section. Additionally (and this is key), seek more support. Ask questions in our Private Support Group (gain access at godiaperfree.com/ECowners). Find supportive folks to chat with. Troubleshoot and get back on track.

Totally Stressed, Bummed, or Upset?

If you're just plain not getting it and/or you find yourself stressed, angry, or majorly bummed out, *get support immediately.* And it may be time to pause or possibly stop altogether, which we'll cover below. Find some people to talk to and express your situation, asking for support, guidance, answers, a shoulder or an ear. Post in our Private Support Group. We are here for you!

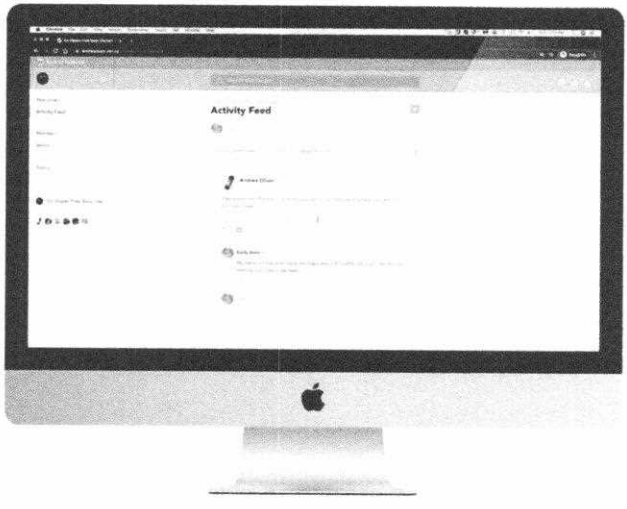
Possibly, pause for a few weeks. Do a re-set and start again. Then begin fresh with The Basics. See if your emotions around EC have shifted to the positive side. If so, get some support and hang in there. If you've tried to get support, paused and re-set, and your emotions are still overwhelming you (and your baby) with bad vibrations...by all means, stop. *You tried your very best and you should pat yourself on the back for that!* And then take the next step, below.

If You Decide to Stop

Stop doing EC and, instead, plan to read my potty training book when your baby is 16-18 months old, and do the training by 18-20 months of age. No harm, no foul. Until your baby approaches that age, try to retain the basic principles around communicating gently and non-coercively with your child. This "way of being" will support your relationship in so many ways. If you are able, try to continue diapering so it maintains her sensitivity so when you're ready to move toward potty independence with my potty training method, it will be easier for you both.

OTHER QUESTIONS?

Hop on over to our Private Support Group (gain access at godia-perfree.com/ECowners) and get some support, or see the *expanded* Troubleshooting Section of the Book Owners Website at the same link.



THANK YOU!

I HOPE YOU'VE ENJOYED READING MY BOOK

You did it! You finished a book (with a new baby) – amazing.

Stay updated by visiting me at GoDiaperFree.com for my blog, podcast, videos, resources, and gear recommendations. If you are signed up for my email newsletter, I will send you new blog posts, podcasts, and videos packed with helpful tips and tricks and promise not to ever spam you (sign up at godiaperfree.com/newsletter).

Just by reading this book, you have made steps toward enhancing the communication and connection within your growing family.

No matter what the outcome, what you're doing *matters* and I am happy to live in this world with someone like you! Enjoy EC.

SHARE, EARN, AND HOST

Please help other new parents learn about infant potty training. It's never too late to start, and most parents tell me they would have practiced some bit of EC had they known about it sooner! Please **share this book link with your friends**: godiaperfree.com/thebook.

You can also help spread the word about EC *and* earn a thank you commission for every tracked sale you refer to us. For more info and to sign up, visit godiaperfree.com/referral-program.

Last, if you want to bring EC to your town by hosting a local EC group in your community, you'll want to consider enrolling in my popular Go Diaper Free Certified Coach Training Program. New classes form all the time and are available worldwide. Learn more at godiaperfree.com/coachprogram - and make an impact teaching others EC, just like I do.

LEAVE A REVIEW

If you've enjoyed this book, please hop on over to Amazon and leave a review at godiaperfree.com/amazon. It is much appreciated.

I wish you such a sweet time with your baby! Stay in touch.

xx

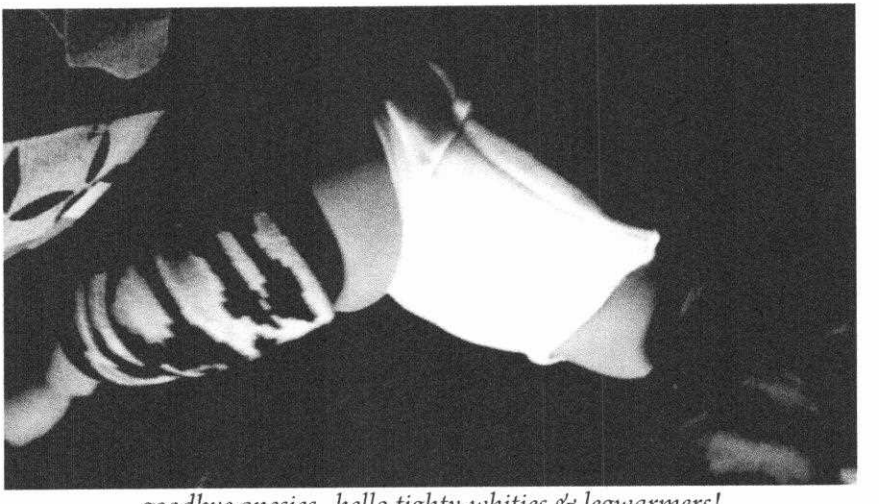
PS - Again, you can reach me @GoDiaperFree on Instagram or on Facebook.com/GoDiaperFree, or email me directly at andrea@godiaperfree.com. I'd love to hear from you!

THE END

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Supply List

Although EC-specific supplies are optional, having some of these items can make it easier for you and your baby to practice EC. All the supplies I recommend are things I've used that have helped our EC journey. Many of these items have been indispensable, and some have been rather difficult to find! Please visit *godiaperfree.com/supplylist* to see the most current EC supplies that I recommend, and make it easy on yourself to gear up for the journey by clicking directly from that webpage to the stores that carry these items.



goodbye onesies...hello tighty-whities & legwarmers!

As a preview to what you'll see when you download the full list, I've shared the general items below. Most importantly, and at the least, I recommend the following:

ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES AVAILABLE AT MY SHOP, TINYUNDIES.COM
(Btw, the entire Tiny Undies store was created because I couldn't find the tools I needed to easily EC my own babies, so I made them myself. I hope you and your baby find them helpful, too.)

- Tiny Undies small underwear
- Tiny Trainers small cotton training pants
- TinyUps pull-up cloth covers
- Tiny Bums cloth diaper covers and inserts
- Top Hat Potty with warm cozy
- Mini Potty with optional warm cozy (very short and lightweight)
- Wet/Dry Bags
- Tiny Potty and Night Potty board books (for teaching the whole potty routine)
- Bear, our stuffed potty companion
- Tiny Chaps baby split chaps

ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES AVAILABLE AT OTHER SHOPS

(get the full list with up-to-date links to the shops at godiaperfree.com/supplylist)

- compostable disposable diapers like my fave godiaperfree.com/dyper
- elastic-topped pants
- baby t-shirts
- wet wipes – cloth and disposable (compostable)
- toilet seat reducer for big toilet
- portable potty seat like my fave godiaperfree.com/potetteplus
- prefolds
- long socks
- legwarmers (get 5 pair free, just pay for shipping, at babyleggings.com with my code GDF16)
- split-crotch pants
- diaper belt
- waterproof pads like my fave godiaperfree.com/pads
- diaper creams
- wipes warmer
- baby carriers
- car seat protector

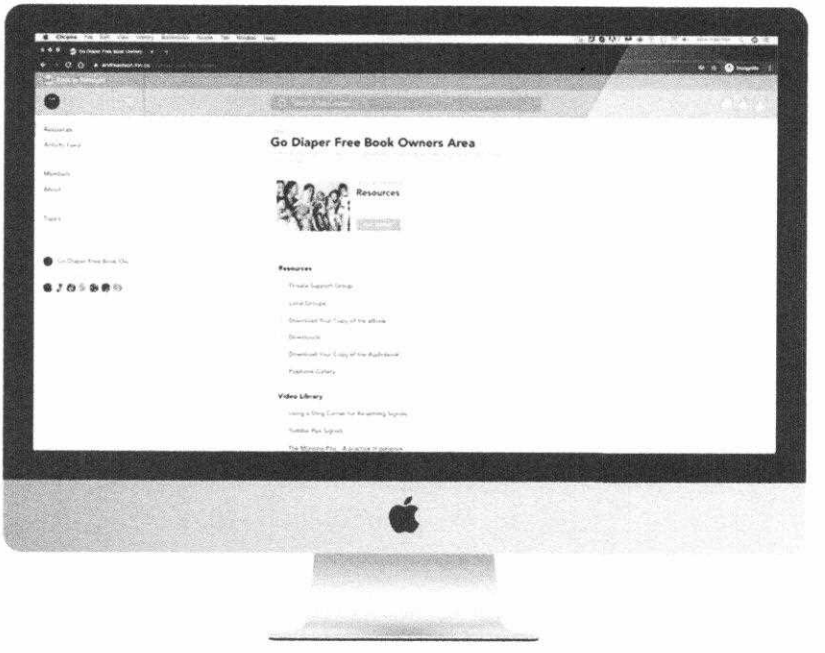
Now, go check out the full Supply List at godiaperfree.com/supplylist or on the Book Owners Website. In the Supply List, I'll go through each of the above and share my favorites out of all the categories, plus exactly where you can get them.

APPENDIX 2: BOOK OWNERS WEBSITE AND PRIVATE SUPPORT GROUP

Where can you access our active private support group, private video library, private Q+As, your new BFFs, dozens more answers to questions, and helpful downloads?

Glad you asked!

Click below to access the Go Diaper Free Book Owners Website. Our wonderful members' area features many audio-visual EC resources and our worldwide community. Again, **EC is best learned hands-on**, and this is the only multimedia resource that will help you get started, figure out the next step, and complete the process.



visit godiaperfree.com/ECowners

This special private website includes many extra support resources including:

- access to our Private Support Group (including help from our Certified Go Diaper Free Coaches and a worldwide community of parents who've also read this book)
- access to private Q+As
- troubleshooting knowledgebase (more answers to common questions)
- private video library
- downloads library
- full-color positions gallery, and
- more added periodically.

APPENDIX 3: RESOURCES

Anyone doing EC in a Western country will benefit greatly from support and ideas from others who engage in the same practice. In the physical absence of intact culture & passed-down tradition, ECers have built many niche communities throughout the world, locally and on the Internet.

Your journey will vary from others', and from time to time, ongoing support and connection in some form are essential to EC (as with many things regarding parenting). Here are some resources offered by Go Diaper Free that should help you find that community..

THE GO DIAPER FREE PRIVATE SUPPORT GROUP

If you have EC questions, simply gain access to our Private Support Group at godiaperfree.com/ECowners and post away! Being in a group dedicated to parents who've all read the same book will help you stay focused, less distracted, and more supported in the long run.

GO DIAPER FREE COACHES + LOCAL GROUPS

I've trained 100s of Go Diaper Free Certified Coaches, worldwide, and teach new coaches every year. If you are seeking a free, local support group or a local class on EC, definitely look up your town at godiaperfree.com/coaches. If you can't find one in your area and/or you feel moved to bring EC to your community, consider joining our Go Diaper Free Certified Coach Training Program at godiaperfree.com/coachprogram. We'd love to have you!

THE GO DIAPER FREE PODCAST

The Go Diaper Free Podcast is the first of its kind: an audio show that teaches, entertains, and shares about the topic of Elimination Communication. I'm your host and I hope you enjoy my exciting, short-format show. If you have something you'd like to hear on the show, email me at andrea@godiaperfree.com. The idea of EC is spreading across the airwaves. Subscribe on iTunes to receive notices about new episodes and leave a review while you're there to help new parents find out about EC. All this can be found at godiaperfree.com/iTunes, or simply search iTunes for the podcast, by the title above. My podcast is now available on Spotify as well.

The Go Diaper Free YouTube Channel

The Go Diaper Free YouTube Channel is where I post videos about elimination communication, including libraries of brief Q+As from our "live" calls, how-to's on specific topics, and videos of EC in action with my babies. It can be found at youtube.com/c/godiaperfree. Please subscribe and hit the bell so I can let you know when I upload a new video and be sure to leave comments on the videos – we answer every one.

Go Diaper Free Social Media Channels

We post regularly on instagram @godiaperfree and Facebook at facebook.com/godiaperfree – and we interact with every comment and message you send us. Please follow us there – and tag us if you post an EC photo that you'd like us to see or share. Other hashtags to use include #godiaperfree #eliminationcommunication #infantpottytraining #naturalinfanthygiene #babypotty #diaperfree #diaperfreebaby #ECanywhere. ;)

And remember...your biggest resources when doing EC are your HEART and your GUT instinct. Trust yourself. GOOD LUCK!

Appendix 4: More from the Author

Books

Paperbacks and board books by Andrea Olson

The Tiny Potty Training Book

A simple guide for non-coercive potty training

Find it at godiaperfree.com/potty-training-book.
Non-coercive in its nature, this book will help you wrap up EC with a solid potty training experience and can also help you *finally* train that older child (ages 18 months and up, although it has been used as young as 15 months).

Tiny Potty Board Book

A teaching book for ages 6 months and up

Find it at godiaperfree.com/tinypotty.
Tiny Potty simply goes through the actual steps of using the toilet in a cute rhyme that teaches the routine to young babies and toddlers in a direct manner. From the self-awareness that baby needs to go, to the final act of returning to play, this book covers the entire daytime potty routine without a focus on "readiness" myths or diaper dependency.

Night Potty Board Book

A before-bedtime book for ages 6 months and up

Find it at godiaperfree.com/nightpotty.
Night Potty is the bedtime sequel to the very popular board book, Tiny Potty. This is a pre-bed potty training board book that actually helps young children stay dry at night (and one that can be read to babies as young as 6 months), also without a focus on "readiness" myths or diaper dependency.

Brave New Birth

Practical wisdom for an unassisted birth (or any birth, for that matter)

Find it at bravenewbirth.com.
A virtual "how-to" manual for a satisfying self-directed birth experience.

Undies + Potties

Super-small gear for EC from Andrea Olson

TinyUndies.com

Shop now at tinyundies.com.
Small 100% cotton underwear + training pants for 6 months-5T, super-short mini potties, newborn top hat potties, pull-up cloth covers, cloth diaper covers, baby chaps, wet/dry bags, and more, all over at my little shop...because when my first baby was out of diapers at 9 months old, he had nothing to wear.

Masterclasses

Free online classes, offered regularly

The Easy Start Class for EC

Take this free class at godiaperfree.com/masterclass.
A crash course in moving from full-time diapers to using the potty... starting today.

The Super-Simple Potty Training Plan

Take this free class at godiaperfree.com/masterclass.
5 steps to ditch diapers for good...like, yesterday.

How to make money (and change the world) telling others about EC

Take this free class at godiaperfree.com/coachclass.
Discover my simple method (and my very special secrets) to bring EC to your town, make money, + change the world...doing what you're already doing.

The Mamaworx Blueprint

Take this free class at mamaworx.com/blueprint.
My step-by-step blueprint to building a mama-run passive income business.

MiniCourses for EC

7 deep dives into the main challenge areas you may face while doing EC with your baby

The 7 MiniCourse Bundle

Get it at godiaperfree.com/bundle.
All 7 minicourses (below). Lifetime access. Done deal.

Baby Meets Potty

Enroll at godiaperfree.com/newborns.
A deep dive into how to start EC with your newborn baby. Huge bonus video library.

Potty Time Master

Enroll at godiaperfree.com/mastery.
Learn when it's time to potty baby (even if she doesn't signal).

Nighttime EC 101

Enroll at godiaperfree.com/nighttime.
Learn how (and whether) to potty your baby at night.

EC While Out + About

Enroll at godiaperfree.com/outings.
Eager (or afraid) to try EC on outings or travel? This'll get you going.

Potty Pause Resolution

Enroll at godiaperfree.com/pause.
A deep dive into getting you thru that deplorable potty pause.

Getting EC Back on Track

Enroll at godiaperfree.com/back.
For those of you who've lost your way with EC (or gotten lazy).

Wrapping Up EC

Enroll at godiaperfree.com/wrapup.
How to complete EC, in 3 ways...so you can be done.

Courses

Andrea's signature courses and training programs

The Big EC Course

Learn more at godiaperfree.com/bigEC.
A step-by-step journey to diaper freedom for those who want an EC immersion with Andrea.

The Go Diaper Free Certified Coach Training Program

Learn more at godiaperfree.com/coachprogram.
Bring EC to your town by joining our network of Certified Coaches.

The Potty Training (un)Bootcamp

Learn more at godiaperfree.com/unbootcamp.
A step-by-step potty training experience for those who want to train as a group.

The MamaWorx Program

Learn more at mamaworx.com/program.
How to build a business in your own passion niche that operates seamlessly like Go Diaper Free and Tiny Undies.

Appendix 5: References

The following are the books, webpages, and persons that provided me with ideas & concepts and served as references, inspiration, and reminders during the creation of this book. With gratitude.

Infant Potty Training: A Gentle and Primeval Method Adapted to Modern Living by Laurie Boucke (2008)

The Diaper-Free Baby: The Natural Toilet Training Alternative by Christine Gross-Loh (2007)

The Attachment Parenting Book: A Commonsense Guide to Understanding and Nurturing Your Baby by Dr. Sears (2001)

The Continuum Concept: In Search of Happiness Lost by Jean Liedloff (1986, 1975)

Parenting From Your Heart: Sharing the Gifts of Compassion, Connection, and Choice by Inbal Kashtan (2004)

Oh Crap! Potty Training by Jamie Glowacki (2012)

Two Experts Do Battle Over Potty Training by Erica Goode, NY Times. (January 12, 1999)

Toilet training: Getting it right the first time. Contemporary Pediatrics, 21 (3), 105-122. (2004)

Factors Associated With Toilet Training in the 1990s. Ambulatory Pediatrics, 1 (2), 79-86. (2001)

BabyCenter.com

Wikipedia.org

WebMD.com

Continuum-Concept.org - articles by various authors, including Jean Liedloff

DiaperFreeBaby.org - website, brochures, and select, anonymous members

Indirectly, members of the Yahoo! Groups from the pre-Facebook Group era of 2010-2013 have provided inspiration & many reminders.

Kerste Connor, long-time DiaperFreeBaby Mentor in Seattle, WA

Big gratitude to our community members who contributed photographs for this book update, including: Arielle Martinez, Kadi Hill, Johanna Bless, Mikayla Gagnon, Aungelique Bargus, Kala Elwell, Alexandra Burries, Yuan Thompson, Sasha Hood, Amber Reed, Katie, Sahara Aguirre, Kate Falk Vonfeldt, Amber Crews, Montessori Thuis, Melissa Lund Ziegler Ross, and on Instagram @noepotvin, @voveryte2000, @livingrhythms, @lauren_yee, @chances_princes, @healiom_wellness, @burritopotatoposicle, @earthmamamedicine, and @infantpottytraining.

About the Author

Andrea Olson, M.A., earned her Masters Degree in Psychology from Pacifica Graduate Institute in Carpinteria, California, in 2007. She earned her certificate in movement-based expressive arts therapy in 2007 and, previously, her Bachelor of Business Degree in Entrepreneurship & Strategic Management in 2000.

Andrea has a knack for taking life's more complicated topics and whittling them down into an accessible, simple form. The result of this is GoDiaperFree.com where she has become a pioneer in helping mothers and fathers worldwide regain their "potty wisdom" with any age child or baby through her books, podcast, videos, and blog.

Prior to her first pregnancy in 2009, she learned that a friend's new baby didn't use diapers. Instead, the baby peed into the sink. Intrigued (and living in California where everything was counter-culture), she

decided to practice infant potty training with her future baby from birth. Upon doing EC (elimination communication) with her newborn, she found it was difficult to translate the EC text into actual practice, so she began writing her first book when her son was 5 months old. When he turned 1, her book became available to the masses.

Since then, she's helped 100,000s of parents worldwide start, troubleshoot, and complete an enjoyable EC practice with their 0-18 month babies. Through her hands-on work with the Go Diaper Free community, she's developed cutting edge methods in the infant potty training field that have solved many EC challenges, making it easier than ever for parents to free themselves from diaper dependence. This 6th Edition of her work brings everything even more up to date and includes even more lessons learned along the way.

She now offers her exclusive line of tiny baby underwear, training pants, and baby potties at TinyUndies.com, for babies and toddlers age 6 months to 5T (and sometimes older, if the bottom is tiny enough). She's also written and published 2 board books for babies 6 months and up, Tiny Potty and Night Potty, and a non-coercive potty training book, The Tiny Potty Training Book, for parents of toddlers 18 months and up (also great for EC completion). It is also Andrea's pleasure to train coaches worldwide to share the message of EC and potty training in her Go Diaper Free Certified Coach Program.

Andrea lives with her husband, five young children, sweet cat, and backyard chickens in lovely Asheville, North Carolina.

Made in the USA
Monee, IL
19 July 2023

stop changing diapers. start pottying your baby.

Over half the world's children are potty trained by one year old, yet the average potty training age in the United States is currently three years old. This leaves parents wondering: *What did people do before diapers?* and *How do I help my own baby out of diapers sooner?*

Elimination Communication, also known as EC, is the natural alternative to full-time diapers and conventional toilet training. Although human babies have been pottied from birth for all human history, we've modernized the technique to work in today's busy world.

Go Diaper Free shows parents of 0-18 month babies, step-by-step, how to do EC with confidence, whether full time or part time, with diapers or without. "Diaper-free" doesn't mean a naked baby making a mess everywhere - it actually means *free from dependence upon diapers*.

With this book, new parents can avoid years of messy diapers, potty training struggles, diaper rash, and unexplained fussiness. Also helpful for those considering EC, in the middle of a potty pause, or confused about how to begin.

This *6th edition* includes a new section on The Dream Pee, a full text and graphic revision, more photos of EC in action, links to deep dives from each chapter, and access to our book owners website, including our coach-led online support group and private video library.

"I highly recommend this beautiful and excellent resource for EC families...richly illustrated and an invaluable compilation of information."
- LAURIE BOUCKE, author of *Infant Potty Training*

ANDREA OLSON has pottied all 5 of her babies from birth, all were out of diapers by walking, no toilet training necessary. She's helped hundreds of thousands of parents start EC across the globe. She has a Master's Degree in Psychology and lives in Asheville, North Carolina with her family.

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